

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF

BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

KING OF THE MARKET; OR, THE YOUNGEST TRADER IN WALL STREET.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.



As Rex raised the man in his arms a dark face, partially concealed by a black mask, appeared at the opening where the bars had been removed. Then, noiseless as a shadow, the man himself stepped out of the window.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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OR,

THE YOUNGEST TRADER IN WALL STREET.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

CHAPTER I.

A SCRAP ON WALL STREET.

Biff!

Smack!

Swat!

Short and sharp, like three subdued pistol shots.

It was all done in a moment.

Three badly demoralized boys, two of whom wore D. T. messenger uniforms, lay on the sidewalk in front of the Sub-treasury building on the corner of Wall and Nassau streets.

A fourth boy—the one who had done the execution—was coolly examining his damaged knuckles, while at the same time he kept a wary eye upon the others.

"Want any more?" he asked, sharply, as one of the boys, a big, loutish youth, with wide, flopping ears, and watery eyes that protruded like a lobster's, began scrambling to his feet, rubbing his damaged eye at the same time.

Evidently neither he nor the others wanted any more, judging from the expression of their faces.

The D. T. boys looked crestfallen and unhappy, while the big boy, whose name was Saul Gruber, scowled malignantly at the bright, curly-headed lad who had proved so formidable with his fists.

The disturbance in so prominent a locality had naturally attracted attention.

Two or three brokers, and several other passersby stopped to looked on.

One of the brokers appeared to know the central figure in the mix-up, for he stepped up to him and asked:

"What's the trouble, Richmond?"

"Oh, nothing much," replied the boy, in an offhand way, "Only these three chaps thought they could do me up, that's all."

"It doesn't look like they had succeeded," laughed the Wall Street man.

"Well, hardly," answered the lad, drily.

"I guess you were too quick for them."

"I'm not asleep when there's anything doing," grinned Richmond.

"I'll bet you're not. You're about as lively a youth on your pins as any in Wall Street."

"Thanks, Mr. Hazard," replied the boy, as he watched the D. T. boys rise and sneak down Broad Street.

Saul Gruber also drew off and slouched down Wall Street with his handkerchief to his eye.

Then the broker nodded to Richmond in a friendly manner and went his way.

"Those chaps were easy," breathed the pugilistic lad as

he, too, left the scene of the disturbance. "Maybe they'll know enough to let me alone in the future, especially Saul Gruber, who is at the bottom of the whole trouble."

Rex Richmond was one of the best-known messenger boys in Wall Street.

He was also one of the most popular among the brokers.

They admired his straightforward, breezy style; his gentlemanly deportment and winning ways.

He was in the employ of Sackman, Withers & Co., a prominent Wall Street firm.

Mr. Sackman was the capitalist and manager, while Mr. Withers executed the orders of the firm, and did it with snap and spirit.

Rex never took any liberties with the senior partner, whose spotless linen and general air of financial responsibility somewhat awed the boy.

But with Mr. Withers, who was a much younger man, and who, not being so wealthy as Mr. Sackman, naturally arrayed himself in less costly apparel, Rex was on a kind of hail-fellow-well-met footing.

Rex had been two years or more with the firm; had won the good opinion and confidence of both the partners, and was an especial favorite with the junior member.

He lived in Harlem with his mother and three sisters in a neat, five-room flat, and enjoyed life as all boys naturally do who are healthy and active, and have a good digestion.

Rex was just skipping up the stairway which led to the second floor of the office building in which were located the offices of his firm, when he ran into the arms of Sam Rickey, his particular friend and associate, who was coming down.

Sam worked for Boomsby & Co., stock brokers, on the same floor in the rear.

"Hello!" exclaimed Sam, with a grin all over his rather lank countenance. "Say, you ought to see Saul Gruber. He passed me just now with one of his eyes looking like seven days of rainy weather. Somebody's been doing him up, or else——"

"Yes, I know all about it," grinned Rex.

"What, did you see him?"

"I rather think I did."

"Do you know what happened to his eye?"

"He ran against something."

"Oh, he did? What was it?"

"My fist."

"Go on; you don't mean it!" cried Sam, in astonishment.

"I don't mean anything else. You know he's been threatening for some time to do me up."

Sam nodded.

"The coward hasn't spunk enough to fight his own battles, so he got two D. T. messengers to help him. They lay for me a little while ago at the corner of Nassau Street. I saw the three of them, as I came along, standing near the Sub-treasury steps, but never dreamed they intended to attack me."

"And they did, eh?" asked Sam, eagerly.

"Well, I should smile. They came at me in a bunch, as if they meant to sweep me off the sidewalk."

"What did you do?"

"I side-stepped and let drive at them, one after the other, as quick as I could work my fists. One got a paste in the neck, another a sockdolager in the jaw, while I rammed Saul in the left optic. Every one of them went down on the sidewalk as if he had been shot."

"Good enough!" chuckled Sam. "You must have astonished them."

"I guess I did. It took all the fight right out of them."

"What then?"

"Nothing. That is all there was to it."

"B'gee! I wish I'd been there."

"I wish you had, too."

"I don't see how you managed to lay the three of them out all at once. Gruber is stouter than you are."

"He's nothing but a bag of gas. I'd like to have a fair slap at him all by himself for just about five minutes. There'd be a vacancy in the messenger service in this building for a day or two."

"I'll bet there would. If I was you I'd look for a chance, and then thump the stuffing out of him for keeps. He deserves it. That fellow is a regular snake in the grass. He's down on you like a thousand of bricks. He never misses an opportunity to run you down to the janitor, the elevator men and even the superintendent of this building; but it's little good that does. He couldn't hurt you with any one who knows you if he talked himself deaf, dumb and blind."

"He's a pretty bad egg, and I often wonder he doesn't get fired from his job."

"His cousin, Bentley Hitchcock, is cashier for the firm, you know, and I guess that accounts for him holding on."

"Some day he'll get all that's coming to him. Give those kind of lobsters rope enough and they'll hang themselves in the long run."

"That's what they will. But I must be off."

"Run along, then, sonny. I'll see you 'round lunch-time."

The two boys parted, Rex taking the stairs, two steps at a time, and gliding into Sackman, Withers & Co.'s reception-room as if he had roller skates on his feet.

He hung his hat up near the indicator and then took a look at the tape, no customers being in the room at the moment.

He was interested in a certain stock, L. & M. preferred, on which he was long to the tune of 20 shares, which he had bought at 60, on a ten per cent. margin, paying \$120 to secure his broker against a drop in the price.

This was the first time he had bought more than ten shares of any stock at a time, as his entire available capital, before he went into his present deal, had been \$150, which he had accumulated from small bucket-shop ventures during the past year.

Rex's one great ambition was to be a broker some day himself, and to that end he was making a careful study of the market, and Stock Exchange methods.

Mr. Withers was his ideal of what a broker should be, and there were many other men in the Street, with whom

he had a speaking acquaintance, who also commanded his admiration.

They all seemed to be jolly good fellows when not fighting one another on the floor of the Exchange, and those were the kind of men Rex wanted to be on terms of intimacy with when he grew up and had made enough money to hang his own shingle out, and let the financial world know he was ready to chase eighths and quarters, premiums and discounts, through the labyrinths of finance.

Whether the boy realized the fact or not, he was naturally adapted to the line of business which most appealed to his fancy.

"Some day," he once remarked to Mr. Withers, "I mean to be king of the market, like Jay Gould or Commodore Vanderbilt were in their day," and the junior partner laughed, slapped him on the back and said that if pluck, perseverance and ceaseless activity would do the trick he was willing to believe Rex would get there.

So with a five-dollar bill the boy received about a year previous from Broker Hazard for some special service he had rendered him, Rex hunted up a bucket-shop and began operations on the stock market, keeping the fact from his employers' knowledge.

After varying degrees of success, he finally found himself with a savings bank balance of \$150, and then he quit the bucket-shop atmosphere for good.

One day he found that L. & M. was going up, and he bought the 20 shares, to which we have referred, of his friend Hazard, and then lay back on his oars to see how he was going to come out.

Apparently he had made no mistake in buying L. & M., for the stock had risen slowly and steadily until now it was printed on the tape at 80—that meant a profit on paper to Rex at that moment of \$400, so it will not be wondered at if he took his customary seat by the window, feeling like a bird.

And while he was patting himself on the back, so to speak, he heard the buzz of Mr. Sackman's bell, and he hastened into the senior partner's private office.

CHAPTER II.

A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS.

"Take this note to Mr. Withers at the Exchange," said the senior partner of the firm to Rex. "Get there as soon as possible, as it's important."

"Yes, sir," answered the boy, and he darted out of the door.

"Always in a hurry, aren't you, Rex?" said pretty Fanny Forbes, the stenographer, who came into the reception-room with several typewritten letters in her hand she was taking into Mr. Sackman's office for that gentleman's signature.

"That's what I am," replied Rex, reaching for his hat. "I'm the winged Mercury of this establishment, and don't you forget that interesting fact."

Fanny smiled coquettishly at him as he crossed to the outer door, while he, in return, kissed his fingers to her.

She and Rex were on excellent terms.

In fact, the boy thought she was the nicest girl on earth, next to his sisters, of course, and there wasn't anything he wouldn't do for her.

What she thought of the stalwart, good-looking young messenger was her own secret.

Rex pulled open the door quickly and rushed out.

He didn't see that somebody—a fat, pompous-looking bank director—was just in the act of entering.

The first intimation he had of that fact was when he butted right into the portly gentleman.

Of course the bank director was unprepared for such an unexpected and violent assault on his sacred person.

The result was, he went down with a grunt and a good deal of undignified haste.

Rex couldn't stop himself and went down with him, turning a clean somersault, with his head pressed against the big man's stomach, taking the wind out of him.

"Ouch!" howled the bank director; as the boy's head indented his corporation.

But that wasn't the worst of it.

Bentley Hitchcock, cashier for Sondheim, Leisberger & Co., a big brokerage firm on the same floor, on his way to an early lunch, came along just as Rex's legs were circling in the air over the body of the stout director.

Hitchcock was always dressed with scrupulous care, wore a big diamond on his little finger and another in his up-to-date scarf.

In fact, so far as personal appearance went he outshone every other employe in the building.

It happened that he reached the danger zone at an awkward moment.

Catching sight of the lad's descending feet, he tried to avoid them.

Rex's heels struck squarely in the center of Hitchcock's silk hat.

Of course, the shiny headgear came off second best.

Both the bank director and the cashier used considerable liberty with the English language for a moment or two, during the flow of which Rex Richmond picked himself up, secured his hat, and then politely started to assist the stout man, whom he recognized, with some dismay, as one of his firm's most influential customers.

"What in thunder do you mean by running into and upsetting me in this fashion?" sputtered the fat man, in a towering rage, after the boy helped raise him to his feet.

"I beg your pardon, sir. It was an accident," protested Rex.

"You young villain, I believe you have injured me internally!" cried the bank director, feeling the region of his white vest, which had suffered the most.

"I'm very sorry, sir."

"Sorry!" roared the stout man. "You jackanapes, I've a great mind to have you arrested!"

"But, sir, I couldn't——"

He didn't get any further, for at that moment Bentley Hitchcock took a hand in the proceedings.

The angry cashier reached for Rex, grabbed him by the collar of his jacket, yanked him back a foot and gave him a heavy box on the ears.

The messenger boy, recollecting he had already lost valuable time, wriggled himself free from Hitchcock's clutch, darted for the stairway and was soon on the sidewalk, making for New Street and the back entrance to the Stock Exchange as fast as he could go.

"Gee!" he muttered as he ran, "I'm afraid I'll catch thunder when I get back. That was Hamilton Whitehouse, of the American National Bank. He'll put it all over me to the old man. Well, it'll be the first time I've ever been called down, so I guess I can stand it."

Trouble, however, still pursued Rex.

In his hurry he made a close shave of the New Street corner.

Saul Gruber was also making a close shave of the same corner, only he was coming from the opposite direction.

He was carrying a rush message from Mr. Sondheim at the Exchange, to Mr. Leisberger at the office.

Neither of the boys saw each other till they came together with a bang.

As Gruber was much the heavier of the two, Rex got the worst of the encounter.

When Saul recognized Richmond, who had fallen in a heap at his feet, he was tickled to death.

He had been nursing his sore eye and his resentment ever since he had got the worst of the encounter in front of the Sub-Treasury building.

Here the unexpected had turned up in his favor, and he grinned like a famished hyena.

He took immediate advantage of Rex's situation to give him a cowardly kick in the ribs.

Then he started to run.

But he didn't get far.

Rex was a quick thinker, and equally quick in every other way.

As Gruber started off, the other grabbed him by one of his feet and Saul, losing his balance, pitched forward around the corner into Wall Street.

Rex picked himself up and started on again.

He entered the messengers' entrance to the Exchange and told the doorkeeper he had a note for Mr. Withers.

It was some moments before the junior partner of the firm appeared at the railing.

When he did he looked as if he had been in a scrimmage.

His hat was on the back of his head, his tie was crawling up under the right ear, and his coat looked mussed.

Evidently he had been having a strenuous time of it on the floor since he left the office a few moments before ten.

As a matter of fact, he had.

He was a conspicuous object for the attack of the bear clique, which was opposing the Great Western Securities Co., of which Sackman, Withers & Co. was the head and front.

With aggressive confidence, backed by a buying power

that appeared inexhaustible, he never once had wavered under the repeated drives made at the stock.

The fight had been going on for weeks, the syndicate of bears operating through Sondheim, Leisberger & Co., using every possible artifice to break Harley Withers down, but thus far they had failed, and the stock kept on advancing.

When it was up to Mr. Withers to make good he was there and ready.

He snatched the envelope from Rex's hand, tore it open and digested its contents in a twinkling.

Then he rushed back again into the heat of the conflict and was engulfed by a sea of fluttering hands as his strident voice broke out, like some rock along the shore is suddenly covered by the incoming creamy surf.

"Gee!" thought Rex, "Mr. Withers has got his hands full these days, for a fact. I wish I was in on Great Western myself a few thousands."

Just then a couple of well-known brokers passed out that way, probably after a hasty bite, and Rex heard one remark:

"I'm going to throw my 10,000 of L. & M. on the market when I get back. You do the same, Abbott, and I'll bet you the boom will go to pieces."

They passed out of hearing.

"Great Scott!" breathed Rex. "I guess it's lucky I heard that. I'd better get out from under myself with my little 20 shares or the first thing I know I'll be in the soup. I intended to hold on a while longer, but I won't chance it now."

So he stopped at Broker Hazard's on his way back and ordered his stock sold.

CHAPTER III.

A POINTER ON D. & G.

When Rex reached the office he found that Mr. Sackman had gone to his lunch.

Fanny Forbes was eating hers in the little nook in the counting-room where her machine stood.

"You've got yourself into a nice scrape, Rex Richmond," she remarked, when the young messenger stopped before her table.

"For upsetting Mr. Whitehouse in the corridor, you mean?" replied the boy, with the suspicion of a grin on his face.

"Yes; and doing all sorts of things to Mr. Hitchcock."

"Has he been in kicking about it?"

"Yes."

"Did you hear what Mr. Sackman has to say about the matter?"

"No."

"Well, it wasn't my fault. I didn't see Mr. Whitehouse in time to avoid him. I was in a hurry, and he happened to come in at the door just as I was going out. When I tumbled over him I struck Hitchcock, who was coming by at the time. When Hitchcock got up he grabbed me and

hit me in the face. I wouldn't stand for that and butted him in the stomach."

"Did you, really, Rex?" cried Fanny, bursting into a merry laugh, for she positively disliked the cashier of Sondheim, Leisberger & Co., for he had a habit of annoying her with his attentions, and she had no use for him.

"I did, really. I gave him all that was coming to him, bet your life. I don't allow any one to pound me in the face and get away uninjured."

"What a boy you are!" she cried, admiringly.

"I'm not worrying about what he said to the boss. It's different, though, with Mr. Whitehouse. He's one of our solid customers. I suppose Mr. Sackman will feel compelled to investigate the case, but I don't see where I'm to blame."

"He'll advise you to be more careful in the future; that's about all there'll be to it," said Fanny, confidently.

"I caught a knockdown myself up at the corner of New Street," grinned Rex.

"Why, how was that?"

The boy told about his contact with Saul Gruber.

"What a mean boy to kick you when you were down," said Fanny, indignantly.

"I got square with him all right," and he went on to tell how he had tripped his enemy up, and left him settling conclusions with another boy he had tumbled against.

"I hope he got it good," replied the girl, in a tone of satisfaction. "I never could bear that Gruber boy. He's too disagreeable for anything. And uses awfully bad language sometimes in my presence.

"I'd like to catch him at it. I'd make him look two ways for Sunday."

"I don't want you to get into any trouble with him on my account. By the way, Rex, how is that block of stock you own?" she asked, with a smile.

"Do you call twenty shares a block?" he snickered.

"Why not? What have you done with it?"

"I've just sold it."

"How much have you made on the venture?"

"I made a profit of \$21 1-4 a share, less commissions."

"That's over \$400, isn't it?"

"That's what it is."

"How lovely! I could buy several new dresses, hats, and other things with that if it had been my deal."

"So you could. Why don't you take a flyer once in a while?"

"I wouldn't know what to buy. Besides, I don't think I can afford to lose."

"Save a few pennies and I'll let you in on my next deal."

"Rex Richmond, don't you dare invest all that money again in stocks!"

"Why not? Do you want me to give up all hope of becoming king of the market some day? I'm surprised at you, Fanny Forbes."

"You ought to put that \$400 in the savings bank, where it will be safe."

"I'm worth \$550 now, and I mean to make it \$5,000 just as soon as I can," said Rex, wilfully.

"If you don't put **that** money in the bank I won't speak to you again."

"Won't you?"

"No," she answered, decidedly.

"I thought you was a friend of mine."

"You don't seem to appreciate my friendship. I don't want to see you lose your money."

"You seem to have very little respect for my judgment."

"Would you call it good judgment to invest all your money in a lottery ticket? Well, stock gambling is just as much a game of chance."

At this point Sam Rickey stuck his head in at the counting-room door.

"Going to eat, Rex?"

"Sure thing. By-by, Fanny. When I get rich and buy a house on Riverside Drive I'll ask you to marry me," said Richmond, with a chuckle, as he made for the door.

"I wouldn't have you if you offered me a palace," pouted the girl.

"Do you expect me to believe that, Fanny?" laughed Rex.

"I don't care whether you believe it or not."

"Well, I don't believe it. You wouldn't be able to say 'Yes' fast enough."

Miss Forbes took up a newspaper and threw it at him.

Richmond picked it up, handed it back politely, and then left the office with his friend Sam.

That afternoon at two o'clock, L. & M. broke under a bear attack and a good many people lost money.

Rex, however, congratulated himself on the fact that luck had run his way and he had come out at the top of the heap.

Next morning he got his check and statement of account from Hazard.

He got the check certified and then deposited it in a bank.

Later on he showed his pass-book to Fanny.

"You'd better let me keep that book," smiled the girl, "or when the temptation comes along you'll draw out all that money and invest it again."

"Look here, Fanny, I'm going to marry you some day, and I want to make enough money to pay for your clothes."

"What a cheek!" exclaimed the girl, with a blush.

"Didn't I tell you I wouldn't have you if you were made of gold dollars?"

"What a girl says and what she means are two different things," he replied, with a grin.

Beore she could make one of her spunky replies, Mr. Sackman's bell rang, and as it was Rex's signal he was off like a shot.

"Take this letter to Mr. Whitehouse in the Mills Building. Recollect, I expect you will offer him an apology for your rudeness yesterday," said the head of the firm.

Rex promised to apologize.

Mr. Sackman had already accepted his explanation of the little affair, and excused it on the ground of zeal, but had warned him to be more careful in the future.

When the boy presented himself before the portly Mr. Whitehouse, that gentleman regarded him severely.

Rex hastened to express his regrets over the unlucky encounter in the corridor.

"I'll forgive you, Richmond," replied the bank director, who was in unusually good humor that morning, "but don't let it occur again."

"No, sir; I'll be more careful."

Mr. Whitehouse opened the note, read it and wrote an answer.

While he was thus employed, the boy had accidentally noticed an open letter lying on the edge of the handsome rug, near the waste-paper basket.

It was not typewritten, but inscribed in a bold, large hand.

There were only a few words, and the boy read them without thinking.

The writer informed Mr. Whitehouse that a pool had been formed to boom D. & G. railroad stock and advised him to go in heavily.

As the director handed Rex the envelope to take back to Mr. Sackman, the boy reached down, picked up the letter and handed it to Mr. Whitehouse.

"This was lying on the floor, sir. Perhaps it slipped off your desk."

The big man glanced at it, turned it face down on his desk and thanked Richmond for picking it up.

Then Rex left the office.

"I think I'll keep my eye on D. & G. and see what happens," he said to himself. "I wouldn't be surprised if I have got hold of a first-class tip."

At the office he looked up the standing of the stock and found it had been selling low for a long time.

Consulting the tape, he saw there had been several sales that morning around 35.

During the afternoon he noticed there were many more sales of the same stock, and that its unwonted activity had sent it up to 36.

"I think I'll risk it," he concluded, just before he left the office for the day. "I can buy 150 shares on a ten per cent. margin. If it should go up seven points I would be able to clean up \$1,000. Wouldn't that be great?"

He found Sam Rickey waiting for him at the street entrance, and they started off together for the Hanover Square underground station.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE SUBWAY.

The two boys had just reached the corner of Pearl Street when a particularly ripe tomato struck the corner of Rex's right ear and then went to smash against one of the pillars of the elevated road.

"Whew! Where did that come from?" exclaimed Sam.

They both turned around quickly, but there was no one in sight whom they could accuse of sending the over-ripe missile in their direction.

"I might have got that all over me," said Rex, with an air of disgust, as he looked at the damaged pulp and flow of red juice which was running down the iron post.

"It would have made you look like thirty cents," laughed Sam. "I wonder who could have fired it?"

"I might expect just such a trick as that from Saul Gruber," said Richmond. "But I hardly think he'd dare monkey with me in that way. He knows what he could expect if I caught him at it."

"What's the matter with his doing it and then dodging into one of the doorways? That would take him out of sight in a moment."

"I've a great mind to go back and investigate," said Rex, in a determined tone.

"I'll tell you a better way. We'll turn the corner and hide. Maybe he'll come along. We can tell by his manner whether he's guilty or not."

Rex agreed to adopt that stratagem.

"There he is now on the other side of the street. He's just turned up Pearl," said Sam, taking a peek from the shelter they occupied.

"Well, had we better go for him?"

"It isn't worth while. There isn't any evidence that he threw the tomato."

"Did he look this way?"

"Yes; but that doesn't prove anything."

"Well, let's go on, then. If he really is up to such tricks as that tomato business, I'm bound to catch him, sooner or later, and I'll give him a dressing down he won't forget in a hurry."

The boys caught a local and got out at Brooklyn Bridge to wait for a Lenox Avenue express.

The train came in, crowded, and quite a mob was waiting to board it.

"Push!" snickered Sam, as the door of the first car was opened, "or we'll get left."

A regular jam occurred at the doorway.

Rex got his foot on the step when a big boy suddenly squeezed in from one side ahead of him, treading on his feet.

"You've got an awful nerve!" cried Richmond, indignantly, giving the boy a dig in the ribs.

"What did you do that for?" snarled a familiar voice, as the boy turned his head around and revealed the unprepossessing features of Saul Gruber.

"It's you, is it?" said Richmond, angrily, for the suspicion that Saul had thrown the tomato was strong in his mind. "Want some more of what I handed you out yesterday morning, do you?"

"Yah!" snorted Gruber.

"Step lively there!" bawled the conductor. "Don't block the way."

Just then somebody behind Sam gave him a shove, and the three boys were squeezed into a pretty small compass, while the conductor closed the door.

The passengers were now packed in the car like sardines. But they didn't seem to mind that.

They were used to it from long experience on the elevated roads before the subway came into operation.

The first stop was made at Fourteenth Street, where another crowd was waiting to board the express.

"Suffering jew's-harps!" groaned Sam, as a big man, wishing to get out, pushed him hard up against Rex, who, trying to make room, trod on Saul's toes.

"Wow!" roared the boy with the lobster eyes.

"What's troubling you now?" chuckled Richmond.

"You did that on purpose," snarled Gruber, with a vindictive look.

"Did what on purpose?" asked Rex, innocently.

"You know well enough. I'll get square with you for that."

"I wouldn't try if I was you, sonny," replied Rex, banteringly.

"Yah! I hate you!"

"Thanks. Tell me something new."

"Who threw the tomato?" gurgled Sam, as he gave Rex a hard squeeze against his enemy.

"Oh, oh, oh! You're knocking the breath out of me!" cried Gruber.

"What's the matter with you? That's the crowd trying to get on."

"No such thing," answered Saul. "The door is closed."

"Well, it wasn't me, anyway," said Rex, with a grin.

"Then it was the stuff that's with you."

"What are you calling me?" roared Sam, putting his arm over his friend's shoulder and catching Saul by the ear.

"Leave my ear alone, will you?" howled Gruber, viciously kicking around Rex's legs, and landing on the shins of a passenger.

The victim resented this liberty with his lower extremities by smacking Saul in the face.

"Oh, my nose!" wailed the boy with the lobster eyes.

"Do you call that wart a nose?" snickered Rickey.

"Grand Central Station!" announced the conductor, as the train began to slack up for its second stop from Brooklyn Bridge.

There was more crowding and pushing by people who wanted to get off here.

Then came a rush by the mob on the platform in their eagerness to board.

"Move forward, please, and let these people on!" cried the conductor.

"Not on your life," muttered Rex. "The air is bad enough out here."

"That's right," agreed Sam. "This is a regular cattle train."

"It's good enough for such beasts as you two," said Saul, spitefully.

"Hello! Have you woke up again?" chuckled Rex. "I thought that punch in the nose had settled you for good."

"You've got another think coming, then."

"Don't get too gay, Gruber, or something might happen to you," chipped in Sam.

"You two make me sick!" said Saul, with a sneer.

"I'll bet we will before we get through with you!" retorted Rickey.

"Yah!" snarled Saul.

Gruber got out at Ninety-sixth Street station.

The other two continued on till the train reached Lenox Avenue and 135th Street, when they got off, too.

Next morning Rex went to the bank at the first chance he had, drew \$540, and took it up to Hazard's.

He ordered the purchase of 150 shares of D. & G. at 36.

The order was telephoned to Mr. Hazard on the floor of the Exchange and within ten minutes the stock was bought at that price.

The next sale was made at 36 1-8, and when Rex went out to lunch, D. & G. was quoted on the ticker at 37.

"I s'pose you wouldn't believe it, Sam," he said to his chum, as they munched their lunch cakes and drank their coffee, "but I've made \$150 since I saw you this morning."

"How?" asked Rickey, in some surprise.

"I bought 150 D. & G. at 36 and now it is 37. That's \$1 a share profit. How does that strike you?"

"You must have put up over \$500 to make that deal," remarked Sam, a bit enviously. "Where did you get it?"

"I made most of it on L. & M., which I closed out a couple of days ago, just before it went on the toboggan."

"Gee! You're lucky. I don't see how you manage it."

"By keeping my eyes open and watching the market."

"Withers been giving you a tip?"

"No."

"What made you buy D. & G.?"

"I got an idea it was time for it to go up. It's been down among the dead men for some time. It's due to get a move on. I'd advise you to put any spare change you have into it at once."

"I might be able to buy ten shares between now and this time to-morrow."

"Buy it to-day if you can."

"Can't. My funds are at the house."

"You'll probably have to pay more for the stock to-morrow."

"Can't help it," replied Sam, swallowing the last of his coffee and slipping off his stool.

"Here comes Hitchcock," remarked Rex, as they were walking slowly up Broad Street toward Wall. "He looks as if he could afford to dine at Delmonico's."

Just before the cashier reached the boys he started to cross the street.

It happened somebody had just thrown down a banana peel in the particular spot where Hitchcock stepped off the curb.

He stepped on the slippery side which faced up, and in a moment he was giving an exhibition of a man trying to stand on his head.

There were a great many people in the vicinity at the time.

Probably half of them witnessed the catastrophe and stopped to laugh.

Of course, Rex and Sam stopped also, and enjoyed the scene more than any one else.

CHAPTER V.

REX HEARS SOMETHING ABOUT THE GREAT WESTERN SECURITIES CO. DEAL.

Unfortunately, when Mr. Hitchcock's heels came down again they landed on the edge of a banana cart, presided over by a dark-skinned son of Italy, which was standing close to the sidewalk.

The consequence was the cart tipped up and the air was for a moment or two filled with a cloud of flying bananas, to the great dismay of their owner.

Of course the horde of messenger and newsboys in that vicinity made a grand rush to secure a share of the fruit.

The Italian chased the marauders with a long stick and then began to recover as many bananas as he could find in the street.

He shook his mahogany-hued fist at Bentley Hitchcock when that gentleman picked himself up out of the dirt.

The cashier of Sondheim, Leisberger & Co. was a sight for fair.

His elegant tight-fitting frock coat was split half-way up his back.

As for his \$10 trousers, they were plastered with samples of various kinds of refuse which had gathered near the gutter.

The new silk hat he had bought to replace the one smashed by the red-headed office boy at the time Rex had upset him in the corridor of the office building, went skating under the wheels of a passing cab and became a ruin.

That innocent banana peel had completely wrecked the personal appearance and temper of Mr. Hitchcock, and he was mad enough at that moment to chew a steel toothpick into sections.

It was bad enough to realize that his spotless apparel was completely spoiled, but it was even worse to have been made the butt of general ridicule.

He glared at the grinning throng on the sidewalk, and, as luck would have it, he spied the laughing countenances of Rex Richmond and Sam Rickey.

This was the worst of all, for they would certainly carry the news and circulate his disgrace throughout the building where he was employed.

The very thought of such a thing raised his temper to fever heat.

He was in the humor to do something desperate.

Therefore, he did a very foolish thing.

He rushed onto the sidewalk, seized Rex and Sam before they knew what was coming, and knocked their heads together.

"How dare you laugh at me, you little jackanapes!" he cried, in a rage.

Then Rex and his chum, to avoid further complications, slipped away through the crowd, leaving Mr. Hitchcock to his own devices.

"That banana peel must have knocked his brains side-

ways," said Sam. "The idea of him jumping on us the way he did, as if we were responsible for the disaster."

"What else can you expect from a hog but a grunt?" replied Rex, rubbing his head, which tingled from the shock it had received.

"You've got a pretty hard head, old fellow," said Sam. "I thought for a moment that my scone was fractured."

"Hitchcock is a brute, that's what he is. He and his cousin, Gruber, are a good team. One of these days when I get bigger I won't do a thing to that cashier!"

"You've done one or two things to him already," grinned Sam. "You've kicked him in the chest, butted him in the stomach, and now you've knocked his legs from under him."

"Well, he hasn't received any more than he deserves, nor half as much as he's liable to get if he doesn't haul in his horns."

Hitchcock didn't show up at his office till two o'clock.

Rex met him on the stairs as he was going down, and the cashier scowled ominously at him, but made no belligerent move on the boy.

He had a new hat and new frock coat on, and his trousers had been cleaned as well as circumstances permitted.

That afternoon when Rex and Sam started for home they kept a wary eye out for Saul Gruber, thinking they might catch him trying to play some cowardly trick upon them; but they reached the underground station unmolested.

For the next two or three days Rex was kept on the run, and had very little time to keep tab on D. & G. stock.

But that isn't saying that he lost track of his investment.

He had plenty time after three o'clock to study the market report, and he found that his stock was slowly but steadily advancing.

A good many shares changed hands every day, and it was evident that the stock was in demand.

When the Exchange closed at noon on Saturday, D. & G. had reached 41, which indicated a profit to the boy of \$5 per share.

"I believe that thousand I've been counting on is in sight. What will Fanny say if I can shake that much profit under her nose as the result of this new deal?" he chuckled as he studied the day's report of the proceedings on the Exchange. "Mr. Withers still has his hands full with Great Western Securities Co. I wonder how the firm will come out? It must be taking a pile of money to swing that deal. If Mr. Sackman is furnishing the sinews of war he must own a private gold mine somewhere. Sondheim, Leisberger & Co. are putting up a great fight to down us. But they've got a syndicate of capitalists at their back. I'd like to be a big broker, and be able to take a hand in a big operation like Great Western. Bet your boots I'd make things hum, just like Mr. Withers."

That afternoon he went to Jersey City.

The superintendent of the building had given him a ticket for the matinee performance at the Academy.

He was standing by the rail on the ferryboat after she started out from her slip, when a couple of well-dressed men

sauntered out of the cabin and paused within earshot of him.

The fact that they were talking about the Great Western Securities Co. attracted his attention.

He listened and heard one of them say:

"Withers has boomed that stock well above par, and all on the strength of something favorable that is going to happen. What the dickens do you suppose it is?"

"Ask me something easier, will you, Judson?"

"I can't see how he manages to keep his grip on the market in the face of such opposition as Sondheim has developed."

"Withers is not a man easily downed," replied his companion.

"That seems true enough. A man less aggressive and resourceful would have been snowed under before this. He's still predicting higher prices, but it's my opinion that a crash is about due."

"What makes you think so?"

"Because Sondheim is a bad man to be up against, particularly when he has a barrel of other people's money at his back."

"Withers seems to be able to show up all the money necessary to carry on the deal so far."

"Sondheim boasts that he will put Great Western down to 50."

"He does, eh? And it is now 110."

"When Sondheim talks that way I've always looked for something to drop, and have not been disappointed."

"And you really think he'll be able to get the best of Withers in this deal?"

"It's my impression that he will. He's capable of any sort of dirty move that would enable him to make a profitable turn in the market."

"What do you mean by a dirty move, Judson?"

"Something underhanded, of course. If he doesn't see his way to downing Withers in the ordinary course of business I shouldn't be surprised if he put up some outside job on him. He is suspected of just such tricks in the past, though nothing has ever been proved against him. Sondheim is a sly old fox. He knows how to cover his tracks."

"That may be true, but I'll bet he'll find Withers a tough proposition to handle from any point of view. That man is a born fighter."

"No one will deny that; but every man, like Achilles of old, has his weak point. If you can only discover it you have him at a disadvantage."

"If Withers has a weak point his opponents haven't found it out yet."

"Sondheim will have to make good his prophecy of a big drop in prices soon or he and his crowd will go to the wall. They have been on the short side from the start, and nothing but a wholesale slaughter of Great Western will let them out with whole skins."

The boat was now approaching the Jersey City slip, and the two men walked forward.

"Sondheim seems to be a bad man, according to the ideas of Mr. Judson," thought Rex, as he, too, went toward the

head of the boat. "And Leisberger is probably a bird of the same feather. Well, I don't wonder they have such people as Hitchcock and Saul Gruber working for them. The whole office is probably tarred with the same brush. I'll bet Mr. Withers isn't afraid of the whole bunch. I'd feel sorry for them if he caught them at any real dirty work. He'd be down on them like a thousand of bricks."

Then the ferryboat tied up and the passengers started ashore, Rex following the two Wall Street men up Montgomery Street until they turned up a side street, when he continued on to the theatre.

CHAPTER VI.

FOREWARNED IS FOREARMED.

On Monday morning a new excitement started in the Exchange, before which the Great Western fight, which seemed to have suddenly come to a temporary standstill, faded into insignificance.

Something had come out about D. & G. stock since the Exchange closed on Saturday, and orders came pouring in from the outside public to buy it.

The lambs were flocking into the financial district in shoals, and the frisky brokers were lassoing them at a great rate.

Of course, D. & G. was booming to beat the band.

The first Rex knew of this was a brief conversation he overheard between Mr. Sackman and a customer, about eleven o'clock.

This gentleman left a big order for D. & G.

After he had gone away the head of the firm called Richmond into his room.

"I want you to take this note to Mr. Saulbury, No. — Broadway."

"Yes, sir," replied the boy.

"And this one to Platt & Cooper, Exchange Place. Rush!"

Rex was off like a shot.

He went to the Broadway address first, delivered the envelope to Mr. Saulbury, and received a package.

Then he steered for Platt & Cooper's and ran afoul of Saul Gruber in the main entrance of the office building.

Saul seemed to be in a great hurry, and hardly noticed Richmond.

They went up the same elevator together and both got out at the tenth floor.

Gruber, in his rush to get out, gave Rex a shove.

That's where he made a mistake.

Rex put out his foot and Saul went sprawling on the floor of the corridor.

"You beast you!" cried Sondheim's messenger, picking himself up. "What do you mean by tripping me up?"

"What do you mean by shoving me?" retorted Rex, calmly.

"I'd like to kill you!" cried Gruber, rushing down the corridor.

"Here, come back; you've dropped something!" Rex called after him.

Saul paid no attention but disappeared through the same ground-glass door Rex was aiming for, namely, Platt & Cooper's.

Richmond stooped and picked up an envelope.

The gummed end had been insecurely fastened and the enclosure, a business card of Sondheim, Leisberger & Co., came out in the boy's hand.

Written in bold characters on the back of the card were these words:

"We've got a plan in view to squelch Withers. If it works G. W. will go to pieces. Call at my house to-night without fail. (Signed) S."

The envelope was addressed to Marcus Flommerfelt.

Rex knew that this party was a big broker in that building.

He decided that Mr. Withers ought to see that card.

"This looks like a bit of that dirty work hinted at by that man Judson on the ferryboat last Saturday. Forewarned is forearmed. It is my duty to look after the interests of my firm."

Rex put the envelope into his pocket and entered the office of Platt & Cooper.

Gruber was holding down a chair in the reception-room. He scowled at Richmond as Rex asked to see Mr. Cooper.

"Mr. Cooper is engaged," replied the office boy.

"Tell him there is a messenger here from Sackman, Withers & Co., and that the matter is important."

The boy entered Mr. Cooper's private room and delivered the message.

Mr. Cooper followed him out, took the envelope Rex offered, tore it open and read it, thought a moment, then scribbled two words on the envelope and returned it to Rex.

The boy hurried back to the office and delivered the envelope to Mr. Sackman.

Before taking his seat in the reception-room again he examined the tape at the indicator and saw with satisfaction that sales were rushing in D. & G. and that the price had advanced to 46 3-8.

"I'm \$1,500 ahead. Well, say! If this keeps on I'll be able to buy a house and lot."

Customers began to come in, and Rex was soon sent away to the Mills Building.

He didn't have another chance to look at the tape till Mr. Sackman went out to lunch.

D. & G. had advanced to 49.

He slapped on his hat and ran around to Boomsby & Co., on the same floor, and met Sam coming out of the door.

"Going to lunch?" asked Rex.

"Yep."

"What do you think of D. & G. now, Sam?"

"It's all to the good, bet your life!" replied his chum, enthusiastically.

"Aren't you glad you took my advice and bought those 10 shares?"

"I should smile. I paid 38 for 'em; now they're worth——"

"Forty-nine. You're over \$100 winner."

"And you?"

"I'm \$1,950 ahead."

"You'll be able to start a bank."

"I haven't got the money yet."

"How much higher do you think it will go?" asked Sam, eagerly.

"I couldn't tell you."

"When do you expect to sell?"

"Couldn't tell you that, either."

"I've half a mind to realize on my century," said Rickey, doubtfully. "A bird in the hand is worth half a dozen in the bush."

"That's right; but I'd hold on a while longer, if I were you."

"But the bottom might drop out of it this afternoon."

"It might, but I don't believe it will. The excitement has only just commenced."

"I was over to the Exchange an hour ago. The brokers were fighting like cats and dogs for that stock."

"That's what I thought by the looks of the tape. Everything seems to be D. & G. to-day."

They entered their favorite quick-lunch house.

"We'll be able to patronize Delmonico's next week, don't you think?" grinned Sam, calling for a plate of browned hash.

"I should hate to be so reckless with my funds," replied Rex, as he told the waiter to bring him stewed kidneys.

"The brokers are having a regular harvest, aren't they?" said Sam, with his mouth full.

"I guess so. We have quite a few new customers ourselves."

"Some people profit by the mistakes of others."

"Yes. Like the ministers who married all these people who were divorced yesterday. Judging from what I read in the paper this morning the divorce mill was working overtime."

"What sort of people are those who are continually seeking divorce?" asked Sam, hunting in his vest-pocket after change to settle his check.

"Married people, principally," grinned Rex, as he followed his friend up to the pay desk.

"Thunder!" gasped Sam. "You're uncommon bright. Where did you pick up all your smartness?"

"I was born so. I suppose your father made you smart, didn't he?"

"How?"

"Didn't you tell me he used to spank you regularly when you were a little kid? That must have made you smart," snickered Rex.

"I s'pose you think that's an awful witty remark?" snorted Rickey. "But I've heard something like that before."

"Maybe you saw it in a theatrical programme. That's where all the jokes fetch up when they get too old for the almanac."

"That's where you're mistaken. They all land in the musical comedies, after their whiskers have been trimmed."

When Rex got back to the office he looked at the tape first thing.

D. & G.'s last quotation was 51.

That meant a profit of \$2,250 then in sight for him.

Mr. Withers soon came in from the Exchange.

Rex handed him the envelope Gruber had dropped in the Exchange Place building.

"How came you by this, Rex?" he asked, in surprise.

"It's addressed to Marcus Flommerfelt."

"I wish you'd read the card inside and then I'll explain."

Mr. Withers did so, and his brow clouded.

"Saul Gruber, Sondheim's messenger, dropped it in the Blank Building. I picked it up, intending to give it back to him. The card fell out in my hand and I couldn't help reading it. Then I thought you ought to see it. Did I do right?"

"Yes," answered the junior partner, with compressed lips.

"All's fair in love and stock operations. But on your life don't mention this matter to a living soul. I've been expecting something of the kind to emanate from the Sondheim end. He's a dangerous foe, and a man can't be too much on guard against his methods. I'm much obliged to you, Rex. I shan't forget you."

"I'd like to tell you something else, sir."

"I'll listen to you."

Whereupon Rex repeated the substance of the conversation he had overheard on the Jersey City ferryboat.

"That man Judson has a pretty clear idea of the situation," said Mr. Withers. "Sondheim isn't popular on the Street. His record is a bit shady. Well, I've laid out to drive him and his backers into a hole and make them squeal good and hard, and I'm going to do it. I hold the whip-hand, and he knows it, that's why he is contemplating some crooked business. Thanks to you, I've learned that Marcus Flommerfelt is in the ring against us. I may now be able to spot the rest of the pool. I'm going to give 'em cause to remember Sackman, Withers & Co. to the end of their natural lives."

Thus speaking, Mr. Withers entered his own private office.

CHAPTER VII.

AUNT MILLIE.

Two days after D. & G. touched 76.

Rex concluded to sell his 150 shares.

"I'll drop in at Hazard's when I go to lunch and tell him to let the stock go."

Five minutes after he had formed that resolution he was called into Mr. Sackman's office.

The broker was bending over one of the lower drawers of his desk.

While the boy was waiting for him to straighten up he noticed a brief memo. on his blotting pad from Hamilton Whitehouse, whose messenger had only just left.

It instructed Sackman, Withers & Co. to sell his big block of D. & G. at once.

Richmond's sharp eyes often saw things he shouldn't have seen.

It wasn't always his fault.

He wasn't a nosey boy by any means, and he didn't intend to read any of the firm's private correspondence.

In this case he simply couldn't help it.

It didn't do any harm any way, while it proved a matter of great benefit to the boy.

When Mr. Sackman resumed his normal position he told Rex to go into the counting-room and bring him a certain book the head bookkeeper would hand him.

The boy did the errand in a jiffy.

"That is all," said the senior partner.

"Whitehouse is getting out from under, I see. Well, then, it's time for me to get rid of my stock just as soon as I can. I guess I'll use the office telephone for a few minutes."

The instrument was not far from Fanny Forbes's table.

Rex went there and called up Hazard's.

As soon as he had made the connection he ordered his stock sold at once.

"All right," came back the answer, and he hung up the receiver.

He saw Fanny regarding him with some suspicion.

"What's the matter, sweetheart?" he said, with a laugh.

"What's that you're calling me?" she asked, threatening him with her ruler.

"Oh, nothing! I thought you were about to speak to me."

"What are you doing at the telephone?"

"Attending to a little private business, Miss Forbes."

"That means you are buying stocks again in spite of what I said to you. It shows how much influence I have with you," she said, tossing her head.

"No, I'm not buying stocks just at present," he answered with a grin.

"Oh! Excuse me; I thought you were. Everybody seems to have gone mad over the market again, and I was afraid you had got another touch of the fever."

"I wasn't buying stocks. I was doing the other thing—disposing of my 150 shares of D. & G."

"What! Do you mean to say that you have had D. & G. stock and never told me a word about it?"

"I plead guilty. You told me you wouldn't speak to me again for ever so long if I bought another share of stock of any kind, and as I didn't feel as if I could worry along under such a heavy penalty, I concluded to keep you in the dark."

"Rex Richmond!"

"Don't say a word, Fanny, I've cleared \$6,000 on this last deal, for I guess my D. & G. holdings are disposed of by this time."

"Six thousand dollars! What kind of a fairy tale is this?"

"It is no fairy tale. It's the solid fact. I put up \$540 as margin on 150 shares of D. & G. some eight days ago at

36. It is now 76. Profit, \$40 per share. Figure it out yourself."

"You don't really mean it!" she fairly gasped, amazed at his statement.

"I'll be able to furnish you with the evidence to-morrow, when I get my check and statement of account."

"Six thousand dollars!" she repeated.

"Yes. Sounds good, doesn't it?"

Fanny didn't seem quite able to grasp the fact.

"You'll want to be thinking about your wedding trousseau," he continued, with a grin. "It won't be so long before I have that Riverside Drive house ready for you. Remember, I'm taking lessons from Mr. Withers, and he's a hummer from hummertown."

"There now, you're wanted," said Fanny. "That's Mr. Sackman's call."

Rex responded to the summons and a few moments later was on the road to the New Street entrance to the Exchange.

Before Rex got back a break in D. & G. had been recorded on the tape, and when business was over for the day the stock had dropped to 61.

"I got out just in the nick of time, Sam," he said to his chum, as the two boys started for home.

"And how much have you cleared?" asked Rickey.

"Six thousand."

"You're picking up money fast."

"You didn't do so bad with your ten shares."

"I'm satisfied. I scooped \$260. I am now a capitalist to the extent of \$300. When you hear of another good thing let me know, will you? I'm out for an even thou."

"I won't forget you, Sam."

Next day Rex returned \$400 to the bank, after cashing his check for \$6,502.50, then he hired a small box in the American Safe Deposit Co. and stowed \$6,000 cash in it, while the \$90 odd he proposed to take home to his mother.

"If I was only of age I could deposit my funds in a big bank and be able to draw my check like any man of means. However, there is no use in kicking. I can't change the law to suit my particular case."

Rex ate his lunch alone that day, and when he returned to the office he heard an uproar in the corridor leading to Sondheim, Leisberger & Co.'s.

Curious to know what the trouble was, he went in that direction.

He found Saul Gruber slapping and booting a boy almost half his size.

"Why don't you get out of here when I tell you?" demanded Sondheim's messenger, giving the boy a shove which sent him to the floor.

Saul then returned to his office and shut the door.

"What's the trouble?" asked Rex of the little fellow, who was crying.

"He put me out of the office and hurt me," blubbered the lad, who was neatly but plainly dressed.

"Why? Did you have any business there?"

"Yes. I wanted to see Mr. Hitchcock."

"Wouldn't he let you see him?"

"Mr. Hitchcock wouldn't talk to me. I heard him tell that boy to put me out."

"And you have business with Mr. Hitchcock?"

"My mother sent me down to ask him to give her back her money."

"Give her back her money?" repeated Rex, in surprise. "Does he owe your mother money?"

"Yes, sir. He's got all of mother's money. Mother keeps a boarding house, and he boarded with us for six months. Mother let him have her money to put in Mr. Sondheim's bank, and now he won't give it back."

"There's something crooked here," thought Rex. "Sondheim, Leisberger & Co. don't receive deposits."

The boy began to cry again.

"What is your name, sonny?" asked Richmond.

"Johnny Davis."

"Where do you live?"

"No. — West 27th Street."

"Well, you'd better go home and tell your mother to come down herself to-morrow. It isn't likely Mr. Hitchcock will put her out like he did you. If he owes your mother money she probably can make him pay it. He can afford to, I guess."

The boy went away and Rex went into his office.

Next day, while Richmond was waiting in the corridor for Sam to join him and go to lunch, he saw a neatly dressed, heavily veiled little woman come out of Sondheim, Leisberger & Co.'s office.

She seemed to be crying, and Rex guessed she was some customer of that firm who had got caught in the market, and he felt sorry for her.

As she passed him she dropped her pocketbook.

She didn't notice the loss and was going on, when Rex picked it up and hastened after her.

He saw the name "Davis" printed in gilt letters on the flap, and immediately he recalled the incident of the little boy the day before, and wondered if this was his mother.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am," he said, politely, stepping up alongside of her, "but you dropped your pocketbook."

She stopped.

"Thank you," she said, in a sweet voice.

As her eyes rested on his clear-cut, boyish face, she gave a little gasping cry.

"Tell me," she cried, in an agitated tone, "are you Rex Richmond?"

"Yes, ma'am, that's my name," he replied, regarding her in unfeigned surprise.

"I—I am your Aunt Millie!" she cried, throwing up her thick veil and revealing a pretty, tear-stained face, which Rex instantly recognized, though he had not seen her for five years.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Rex, fairly staggered by the discovery. "Is this really you, aunty? And in New York?"

"Yes, Rex. It is really I, your aunt. How is Laura, your mother, and your sisters? Are they all well?" she asked, eagerly.

"All well, aunty, and all of us have wondered where you have been hiding yourself."

"I have been in this city nearly a year."

"A year, aunty!" exclaimed the boy, "and you never hunted us up."

"I tried more than once to find you, but could not. What is your address? I will call on my sister this very afternoon."

Rex wrote his address on one of his firm's business cards and handed it to her.

"How big and handsome you have grown, Rex!" she said, regarding him admiringly. "You were only thirteen when I saw you last."

"That's right," laughed the boy. "But I don't think you have changed much, Aunt Millie."

"Haven't I?" with a sad smile. "I have never felt like my old self since your Uncle John died. But I mustn't detain you, Rex. I hope to be at your house when you get home after business, then we will have a good talk."

"Indeed we will, aunty," he said, and then she hastened away.

CHAPTER VIII.

REX TAKES A FALL OUT OF BENTLEY HITCHCOCK.

When Rex reached home that afternoon he found his Aunt Millie and her little boy Johnny the center of attraction in the little family circle.

It was a happy reunion for the two sisters so long separated.

Rex was the only member of the family who had seen his aunt since her marriage to John Davis, an engineer on the Lake Shore Railroad.

Mr. Davis had not been favorably regarded by the Richmond side of the house, and this led to a partial estrangement between the sisters.

Five years before, Millie Davis had paid a flying visit to New York with her husband and little boy, but when she called at the Richmond home everybody but Rex happened to be away.

From that time on the sisters lost sight of each other.

Their husbands died within a year of one another—John Davis being the last to go, as the result of a terrible head-on collision on the road.

Some months after Millie came to New York, and though she made an effort to locate her sister, Laura, she was not successful, as the Richmonds changed their abode several times since the death of the husband and father.

Millie started a boarding house on West 27th Street, and that was where she was living at present.

"And now," said Rex, "I want to understand about this Hitchcock matter. And that reminds me I'll have to give Sondheim's messenger a dressing down for the rough way he treated my little cousin yesterday afternoon when you sent him down for some money which Johnny, whom,

of course, I did not recognize, told me Mr. Hitchcock owed you, or had got from you in some way to deposit with Sondheim, Leisberger & Co. Now, as I know that firm does not do a banking business, they are simply stock brokers and nothing else, I judged some crooked business had been practiced on you by Hitchcock. In my opinion he is capable of it."

"Mr. Hitchcock came to board with me six months ago," said his aunt. "He always seemed to have plenty of money and paid his board promptly. I rather liked him. He represented that he was the junior partner in the firm."

"He did, eh? Well, if he hasn't a nerve!" cried Rex, astonished. "He's only an employee—the cashier of the establishment. It's a pretty good job, of course; but that's a long way from being junior partner."

Aunt Millie turned very pale at this plain statement.

"A month ago," she said, with some agitation, "he tried to persuade me to invest in the stock market, after telling me many glowing stories about the fortunes made in Wall Street. I was timid about taking chances, as I had often heard of many people losing their all in stocks. He assured me that he would make it a personal matter to look after my interests himself, but I hadn't made up my mind to do it, when he changed about and suggested I should deposit my spare money with his firm. That he would be responsible for it. I was induced to let him have about all the money I had—\$500. A week after he left my house suddenly and I did not see him again until to-day. I sent Johnny down three times. The first two times he sent him home with some excuse, but to-day he wouldn't see him at all, and finally had that big boy put him out of the office."

"Hitchcock deserves to be kicked," said Rex indignantly; "and if I was big and old enough I'd do it, too. Well, you say you saw him to-day. What did he have to say for himself?"

"He said he had invested my money in some stock, the name of which I cannot recall; that it went up as he expected it would, and just when he was about to realize a big profit for me the market took a sudden unfavorable turn and everything was lost, including the original amount I gave him."

"He told you that, did he?"

"He did. He promised to make it all up to me some day, but he could not say when. I asked him for \$100, as I need the money, but he said he didn't have it to spare."

"Mr. Hitchcock has evidently been telling you a fairy tale. I am satisfied that he never invested a cent of your \$500 in stocks. More likely he has spent it on himself, for he is the best-dressed man in the building where we are both employed. Well, you have it in your power to send him to prison for what he has done. I hope you will do it, too."

"I think he ought to be punished severely for deceiving me," replied Aunt Millie, with righteous indignation; "but I would gladly agree not to prosecute him if he could be induced to return to me my money."

"Very well," said Rex, after thinking a moment, "I'll tell

you what you can do. Give me an order on him for the money you placed in his hands, and I think I can make him give it up."

"If you only could," she cried earnestly.

"I'll try; but you must agree to put him through if the screws I turn upon him do not bring him to terms. I am resolved to get your money back, or send him up the river. That's the only way to deal with such rascals as Bentley Hitchcock."

Aunt Millie agreed with some reluctance, as she dreaded the publicity of going into court and testifying to her own foolishness.

Rex comforted her somewhat with the assurance that he didn't believe Hitchcock would be such a fool as to let the matter get that far.

He wrote an order which she copied and signed.

"You are very good to me, Rex," she said gratefully. "I hope I shall be able to make it up to you some day."

"Nonsense, Aunt Millie! It's all in the family, you know. I assure you I am very happy to be of service to you."

"He is a lovely boy," said Millie to her sister Laura, Rex's mother, later on in the evening. "A perfect little gentleman. And hasn't he grown handsome?"

Of course Mrs. Richmond agreed with everything that her sister had to say in enthusiastic commendation of Rex, and for the first time in many years the two sisters realized the true meaning of the phrase, "Blood is thicker than water."

Next morning Rex met Hitchcock face to face in the corridor as the latter was coming to work.

The cashier looked as if he had just stepped out of a glass case.

He swung a natty little cane in one hand and had a choice Havana between his lips.

He favored the boy with one of his melodramatic scowls, for ever since Rex left the impress of his heels on his cambric shirt front, and his head in the region of his stomach, Hitchcock hated him as much as a certain nameless gentleman with horns and hoofs does holy water.

"Out of my way, boy!" he said roughly, as Rex stopped in front of him.

"I should like to speak with you a moment, Mr. Hitchcock," said Rex with cold politeness.

"You can't speak to me, you little jackanapes, unless you want to apologize in a very humble way for your recent conduct, in which event I will take your case under consideration. What I ought to do with you is to boot you down stairs."

"You would make the mistake of your life if you tried to do it," said the boy coolly. "I don't allow people to boot me around promiscuously, however much satisfaction the exercise might afford them. I am like a can of dynamite—you want to handle me with care, or something is liable to happen."

"Why, confound your——"

"Now, don't get too gay with the English language, Mr. Hitchcock. I've heard you before, and I assure you the

exhibition you made of yourself was not to your credit. I am here to talk business with you, and——"

"Talk business with me, you little monkey!" cried the cashier, almost white with rage at the cool way Rex was handling him. "I'll talk business with this cane," he added, raising the implement and giving the boy a smart blow with it over the shoulders.

In a twinkling the cane was snatched from his grasp, broken in two and cast upon the floor of the corridor.

"Don't you dare strike me again!" cried Rex, with flashing eyes, "or you won't get off so easy. You'll find out I'm no baby, if you are older than I, as well as half a head taller."

"How dare you talk to me that way!" ejaculated Hitchcock furiously.

"If you were a gentleman I wouldn't. But you are not. You're a cur, a coward, and a thief, and I can prove it."

The cashier, wild with anger, struck at him, but Rex caught his arm and held it.

Then, with his other hand, the boy took from his pocket Aunt Millie's order.

"There," he said, flashing the paper in Hitchcock's face, "is an order I hold on you for \$500, which you obtained from Mrs. Millie Davis, of No. — West 27th Street, under false pretences. I'll give you until three o'clock to-day to pay it or I'll have you in the Tombs, as sure as you are standing here."

The cashier started back aghast.

"What do you mean?" he gasped.

"Just what I said. You are trying to defraud that lady out of the money you enticed from her pocket."

"It's a lie," snarled Hitchcock. "What business have you to butt into the matter anyway?"

"All the business in the world. She is my aunt."

"Your aunt?"

"Yes, sir, my aunt. She has sent to you three times and called upon you once, without receiving any satisfaction. The matter has now been turned over to me for collection. I hold her order, as you can see, for the sum you owe her. Pay up or go to jail. You have until three o'clock to decide which you will do."

Hitchcock was the very picture of consternation.

He was cornered, and he knew it.

"I'll pay," he said in a dogged tone.

"See that you do," answered Rex, shortly, turning on his heel and leaving him.

"Yes, I'll pay," muttered the discomfited cashier, glaring after the boy; "but I'll make you pay doubly dear for it, as well as for your impertinence."

Then Bentley Hitchcock walked on and entered his own office.

CHAPTER IX.

REX BUYS 1,000 SHARES OF C. & O.

Just before three o'clock that afternoon Saul Gruber walked into Sackman, Withers & Co.'s with an envelope in his hand.

It had a bulky look and was addressed to "R. Richmond."

Rex was sitting in his chair reading a market journal. He came forward.

"I want Mrs. Davis's order and your receipt for \$500," said Saul in a sulky tone.

"You shall have them," answered Rex cheerfully.

He tore open the envelope and counted its contents carefully in presence of Saul.

The amount being correct, Richmond went into the counting-room, wrote the receipt for the sum, and handed same, with his aunt's order, to Gruber, who received it without a word, turned on his heel and quitted the office.

"Well, I brought Mr. Hitchcock to his knees all right," said Rex to himself in a tone of satisfaction. "He'll think twice, maybe, before he tries to rob another unprotected woman out of her little savings. I never liked the man, but I didn't think he'd do anything quite as mean as that."

After business hours, Rex called on his Aunt Millie, at her house in West 27th Street.

"Here is your money, aunty," he said, after she had expressed the pleasure she felt in his call. "Please count it, and see that it is all there."

"Why, Rex Richmond!" she cried joyfully. "Did Mr. Hitchcock really give it to you so soon?"

"The best evidence of that fact is that you hold the \$500 in your hand."

"And I believed I should never see that money again."

"I'm afraid you wouldn't if strenuous measures hadn't been adopted to show Mr. Hitchcock the error of his ways."

"Why, what did you say to him?" she asked curiously.

"Not much; but what I did say was right to the point. I simply gave him the alternative of cashing up or going to the Tombs."

"What a boy you are!" cried his aunt in great delight.

"Boys are not quite so useless as some people are inclined to think, are they, aunty?"

"Not when they are like you, Rex. And now you're going to stay to dinner, aren't you?"

"I don't know as I ought to, as mother won't understand what has become of me."

"I won't keep you after dinner, so you'll get home early anyway," said his aunt coaxingly.

So Rex stayed, and was introduced to a select company of boarders as one of the brightest boys in Wall Street.

After dinner Aunt Millie accompanied him to the door.

"I want you to accept a little present from me," she said, offering him a fifty-dollar bill.

"Not on your life, aunty," objected Rex. "I've plenty of money of my own, and you ought to know I wouldn't accept a cent from you for getting back your money."

"But I want to show my gratitude, Rex. I never expected to see a cent of that \$500 again, and I am sure if it hadn't been for you I shouldn't."

"Well, I'll tell you what you can do. You may buy me a couple of nice neckties and send them up to the house by Johnny. That's the limit."

Aunt Millie agreed to this compromise rather reluctantly.

"I think it's real mean of you not to let me do something better than that."

"I shall appreciate the ties very much as coming from you. Good-bye."

Several days passed before Rex saw another opportunity to use his money in any stock speculation, during which interval he had several sham battles with Fanny Forbes over the advisability of taking another shy at the bears.

What she didn't threaten to do to him if he made another plunge into the market would fill a book; but Rex only teased her the more on the subject.

"It's real mean of you anyway," she remarked one day with a pout. "You pretend to think so much of me, and then when I go to the trouble of offering you good advice you give me to understand that you mean to do as you please."

"Well, you see, we men——"

"You men! Why, you don't call yourself a man, do you?" and she burst into a silvery laugh.

"I'm as much a man as you are a woman, Miss Forbes," retorted Rex.

"You think you are," she replied tantalizingly.

"I guess I have proved my right to the title, at any rate. How many men with a capital of \$150 could do better with it than I have done in the last couple of weeks? Just get your gray matter busy and answer that."

"I'm willing to admit that you have done excellently well. I am even willing to concede that you are unusually smart. But remember, Rex Richmond," and she shook her index finger at him warningly, "there is such a thing as overdoing the matter. Look out that you don't wake up some fine morning and find your profits shrunk to a big, round O."

"You're a Job's comforter, you are. Supposing I had taken your advice and kept that \$540 in the bank the other day instead of risking it on D. & G., would I now be able to lay my hands on \$6,000 of my own money?"

"But supposing you had lost that \$540, what then?" persisted the girl.

Rex shrugged his square-built shoulders and walked away.

That afternoon he heard that a certain big broker was organizing a syndicate to boom C. & O. stock.

He got his information through a remark dropped by Sam Rickey, who wasn't clever enough to see what had passed under his nose.

It was a non-dividend paying stock, and Boomsby & Co., Sam's firm, had orders to buy up every share that was offered at the market price.

Rex investigated and found that Gaynor, the active partner of Boomsby & Co., was really making heavy purchases of C. & O.

He was doing it largely on the quiet, and Rex got on to the fact when Gaynor corralled Mr. Withers on the street, in company with Richmond, and asked him if the firm had any of the stock for sale.

He said he wanted to get enough to fill an order.

"You ought to find no difficulty in getting all you want," replied Withers. "I believe there is an immense number of the shares scattered through the district."

"So I believe. That's why I struck you."

"You might try Gessler," said Withers. "I understand that he has a big block of it."

"Thanks. I'll go right down and see him."

Later on Rex found that C. & O. was going at 52.

Once upon a time it had sold at 80, but that was many months ago.

At any rate for a year or more it had been hovering around the half-century mark, and Rex wouldn't have had any confidence in it as a speculative element if he hadn't got wise to the situation that was in process of development.

Still he wasn't taking any more chances than he could help.

He waited awhile to see what would really come of it.

The rise of a point in price and Sam's word that Boomsby & Co. were still buying it right and left determined him to get in on the ground floor while the chance remained.

Rex had sporting blood and never did things by halves.

Wiser heads would have frowned down the chances he took when he set his mind on a thing.

He went to his safe deposit box, drew out \$5,300, took it around to Hazard's and told the surprised broker to buy him 1,000 shares of C. & O.

"I suppose you know what you are doing, Richmond?" he asked the boy, feeling a slight hesitancy in accepting the lad's money, as he had no confidence himself in the stock.

"I generally do," replied Rex, in his off-hand way. "At any rate, you needn't worry about the matter, Mr. Hazard. I think I told you I intended to be king of the market one of these days, and I am using you as a stepping-stone toward that end."

"Thanks for the honor," laughed the broker; "but when I see a boy of your size, for whom I entertain a considerable liking, getting reckless with his dough, I feel called upon to restrain his misplaced enthusiasm."

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Hazard, for your good intention, but I'd prefer you'd treat me as a man, and not as a kid."

"Then you insist that I buy 1,000 shares of C. & O. at 53? Is that it?"

"You're not obliged to accept the order, sir," replied Rex independently; "but I'd prefer to do business with you than anybody else. One of these days you may consider it a privilege."

"I admire your nerve," smiled Hazard. "Well, I'll fill your order. I sincerely hope you will come out ahead, but I have my doubts on the subject."

So Rex put up his money like a little man, and got his memorandum of the transaction.

Then he went back to work with the knowledge that he would be \$1,000 winner on every advance of a point in C. & O.

If it went the other way, the outlook would wear a totally different complexion, but as he never looked for trouble, he put all such unpleasant considerations behind him.

CHAPTER X.

A WALL STREET HERO.

There was a quaint little old woman named Mrs. Quill who was a familiar figure in Wall Street at certain times.

Where she lived no one, not even Boomsby & Co., through whom she transacted all her business, seemed to know.

Her ventures were always of the bullish order, and as she was almost always successful in her deals, from which she realized a considerable profit, it was believed that she was very wealthy.

Report even had it that she owned Chemical Bank stock, the most valuable securities on the market.

She invariably appeared on the eve of some general advance in stocks.

Then for days at a certain hour she might be seen coming down Wall Street from Broadway with her familiar handbag by her side.

She always wore the same plain dark dress, or at least an exact duplicate, and the same little old-fashioned bonnet.

She had sharp, black eyes, which peered out in front of her as she walked.

She never paused at a crossing, except to avoid a passing vehicle, and never looked to the right or the left, but kept straight on till she came to the office building in which Boomsby & Co. were located, when she walked up the single flight, passed down the corridor as noiselessly as some old castle spook, and disappeared through the ground-glass door leading into the reception-room of her brokers.

She was never seen to speak to anybody but Sam Rickey, when she would ask for Mr. Boomsby.

Sam had a standing order to show her into the private office when he was certain the senior member of the firm was not engaged with a caller.

Rex, in common with all the other messengers, telegraph boys, newsboys and bootblacks of the Wall Street district, knew her by sight.

He and Sam had many a joke over her.

On the morning following Rex's purchase of 1,000 shares of C. & O. at 53, he was returning to the office from a visit to the United States Trust Co., when he spied Mrs. Quill bobbing along ahead of him down Wall Street, bound of course for Boomsby & Co.

"That settles it. We're going to have a rising market as sure as my name is Richmond. It's a good omen for me and my new deal. I'm just superstitious enough to believe that. She must have some mysterious inside source of information of what's about to happen. You never see her here after stocks begin to tumble, nor when the market is quiet, or has only temporary spells of exhilaration. Sam says she's considered as clever in working up a deal as the

shrewdest operators. That she has never been known to make a mistake, or to change her mind once she starts out on a thing. She must have a great head."

While Rex was fast overhauling her from the rear, Saul Gruber was coming towards her from the front.

Mrs. Quill started to cross Nassau Street at an inopportune moment.

It was an error she had never till now been guilty of.

Usually she seemed to have a sort of second-sight knowledge of the approach of danger.

The little old woman must have let her mind dwell too intently on the deal she had in view.

At any rate, whatever the reason, she stepped right in the path of an automobile which was on the point of dashing around into Wall Street.

A score of startled pedestrians saw her danger and raised a cry of warning.

She looked up a moment too late to save herself by any act of her own.

But a kind Providence, which notes even the fall of a sparrow, stretched out His protecting hand and snatched her from, perhaps, a fatal injury.

And the agent He employed was the bravest, brightest and manliest boy in all Wall Street—Rex Richmond.

He was hurrying along but a few feet behind the little old woman, when his keen eye saw the imminent danger in which she had placed herself.

There was no hesitation about what followed.

He sprang forward, like the noble boy he was, grasped her around the waist and essayed to reach the further curb.

A score of pairs of eyes watched the daring act.

A score of throats were about to voice their united approval of the feat when—Rex tripped and went down with his burden, and a hush seemed, for an instant, to fall on the horrified onlookers.

"He's lost!" exclaimed a big broker to a friend as the auto bore down and slipped around the corner, in spite of its ponderous brakes that had been applied to stop the machine.

There was a rush for the scene of the disaster.

But the only disaster that had occurred was the destruction of Mrs. Quill's handbag and the scattering of a bunch of stock certificates and many yellow-backed bills in the street.

Rex and the little old woman had escaped death by the narrowest of margins.

The boy stood her on the curb as gently as he would have handled a baby, then he turned and exclaimed:

"Stand back, gentlemen, please. Stand back! The lady has dropped her bag."

He began to gather up the money within reach, and so did others, including Saul Gruber, who seemed unusually active in a good cause.

Once he bumped against Rex in his professed eagerness, then he handed over a handful of bills to Mrs. Quill.

The stock certificates and apparently all the money were handed to the little old woman, who then and there sat right down on the curb and counted her property before

she thought of thanking the gallant lad who had rendered her such a signal service.

Rex had himself recovered most of the money and handed it to her.

Then foreseeing he was likely to be made a hero of by those present, suddenly he made a dive through the increasing crowd and started for his office.

He was already many yards away when Mrs. Quill screamed out that some of her money was missing.

"Haven't you got it all?" asked a bystander, as a policeman forced his way forward to investigate the cause of the crowd.

"No, I haven't," replied the little old woman, sharply. "I have been robbed."

Thereupon Saul Gruber, his lobster eyes squinting maliciously, chipped in:

"I saw that boy," he said, pointing to the retreating form of Rex Richmond, "put something in his pocket when he was picking up your money. Maybe he has got it."

A newcomer who had not seen the rescue immediately formed conclusions of his own and ran after Rex.

"Here," he said, laying a detaining grasp on the lad's arm, "you're wanted back there."

"I'm not going back," replied Rex, shaking off his clutch and keeping on.

"Hold on. You've got to go back," said the man, catching hold of him again.

"Who says so?" demanded Rex, much annoyed.

He didn't mean to be dragged back to the scene of excitement.

He had done his duty, and he couldn't understand why he should not be left alone, if he preferred it.

"I say so," replied the man resolutely.

"Go on, you're dreaming!" replied Rex impatiently.

While they were disputing the matter, the little old woman, led by the officer, came up.

"Have you any of my money, young man?" asked Mrs. Quill of Rex.

"Any of your money?" he ejaculated in surprise. "No, ma'am, I handed you all the money I picked up."

"A boy," and she looked around for Gruber, but he had vanished, "said you put some of my money in your pocket."

"What!" exclaimed Rex, dumbfounded.

"Search him!" cried a voice, very like Gruber's, on the fringe of the crowd.

"This is all nonsense!" interposed the big broker who had witnessed the daring act of Richmond's. "This boy is a hero, not a thief."

"That's right," chimed in other eyewitnesses.

"Why did he run away?" cried the voice again.

"That looks suspicious," said another person on the edge of the crowd.

"Sure it does," said the voice. "Why don't you search him?"

"Officer!" spoke up the broker. "This boy is all right. My name is Westcott, and I'll stand by him. He shall not be searched like a petty thief. That would be an outrageous

act after what he has done for the woman. He saved her life, and I never saw a more gallant act in my life."

Several others also took Rex's part.

"But I have lost over \$300, Mr. Policeman," insisted Mrs. Quill.

"I am willing to turn out my pockets," said Rex, "but I don't think it's fair to ask me to do so."

"It isn't fair," said the broker.

"If the boy is willing, let him do it," said the officer. "Stand back, please."

"Well, then, it mustn't be done here in the street," objected the broker. "Let the lad and the lady come to my office and I will see fair play."

"Bring him along to Mr. Boomsby's office," interposed Mrs. Quill. "I am going there."

"Let it go at that," said Rex to Mr. Westcott. "I work in that building, for Sackman, Withers & Co."

The officer began to scatter the big mob which had, by this time, congregated in the vicinity, and opened the way for the little old woman, Rex and Mr. Westcott to pass.

CHAPTER XI.

A BLOW IN THE DARK.

Quite a large part of the crowd followed the chief actors of the thrilling incident we have just narrated to the door of the office building, where the officer took his stand and prevented any of the curiously-disposed from entering the building.

Rex, Mrs. Quill and the big broker went at once to Boomsby & Co.'s.

There was nobody in the reception-room at the time but Sam Rickey, and he was surprised to see his chum enter the room with the little old woman.

"Now, young man," said Mrs. Quill, "I didn't ask you to come here because I expected you had the missing money in your pocket. I don't believe you have. You have the face of an honest boy. You saved my life, and I want to thank you for your effort in my behalf. Further, I am going to present you with my check for \$10,000, as a small token of my gratitude."

Both Rex and Broker Westcott listened with some astonishment to the matter-of-fact way in which the little old woman expressed herself.

From her manner on the sidewalk they had been led to expect a different and, perhaps, unpleasant scene in the reception-room.

Both were much relieved, Rex particularly, to find their fears groundless.

"I am very happy to have rendered you a service, ma'am," said the boy, with a frankness which increased Westcott's admiration for him; "but I must beg to decline any money consideration from you. If I risked my life it was solely to save you from injury, and I should have a

very small opinion of myself if I took pay for doing that which I look upon as my duty."

Mrs. Quill regarded Rex intently with her keen gray eyes while he was speaking.

"Young man," she said, "I should like to know your name."

"Rex Richmond."

"Are you employed in Wall Street?"

"Yes, ma'am. With Sackman, Withers & Co., stock brokers, in this building."

"Young man, you shan't regret what you have done for me. On the whole, I am pleased to see that you value a noble service above mere money. Such a sentiment commands my respect. I am an old woman and have seen much of life. It is refreshing to meet with a young man whose aims are high. Money is, perhaps, the least valuable of life's blessings, and yet the most sought after. I shall expect to know you better, Master Richmond, and to be of service to you hereafter."

She held out her hand, encased in a lace mitt, to Rex, with old-fashioned courtesy, and the boy took it with a polite bow.

Then she turned to Sam Rickey, who had been regarding the proceedings with no little wonder, and said:

"I wish to see Mr. Boomsby."

"Yes, ma'am," answered Sam, promptly, and ushered her into the senior partner's sanctum.

"I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Westcott," said Rex, turning to the big broker. "You were very kind to accompany me to this office."

"That's all right, Richmond. The old lady seems to be reasonable enough, only a bit odd. I can see you've got on the right side of her, and as she is accounted wealthy, if she should happen to remember you in her will you may come into something handsome one of these days."

"I'm not looking for anything of that kind, Mr. Westcott," replied Rex.

"Well, if such a thing should happen, my boy, I don't suppose you'd object to accept it. I know I shouldn't."

With that the big broker shook hands with him and went away.

"Say, Rex," asked Sam, "what the dickens have you been doing for Mrs. Quill?"

Richmond informed his friend how he had saved the little old woman from being run over; how her bag had been smashed and her money and stock certificates scattered on the street, and how, after everything had seemingly been recovered, she found \$300 missing, and some boy had told her he had put it in his pocket.

"Just as if I would do such a thing," he said, with a trace of indignation in his tones. "Why, there were people in the crowd who wanted to have me searched on the spot. You can't imagine how embarrassing it was to me."

"Sure it was, old man. I suppose some fellow managed to get his hooks on several of the bills and got away with them."

"I'm not saying anything, Sam, but Saul Gruber was there and very officious in picking up the old lady's prop-

erty. I don't say he's the guilty party, but I haven't a very high opinion of his honesty, to tell you the truth."

"Nor I either."

"The voice of the fellow who wanted me searched sounded very like Gruber's."

"He'd do anything to make you look small."

"What would they have found if they had searched me? Both of my jacket pockets are empty to begin with," and Rex illustrated his words by turning them out.

A couple of bills dropped on the carpet.

"Hello!" cried Sam, picking them up. "Do you call these nothing?" and he held up two \$100 bank notes.

"You don't mean to say those fell out of my jacket pocket?"

"They didn't come from anywhere else, old man. Didn't you know they were there?" in surprise.

"Certainly not. How they came there is a mystery to me," said Rex with a puzzled look.

"Do you think they are a part of the old lady's missing money?"

"I don't see how her money could have got into my pocket."

"It might have been put there."

"Put there!" exclaimed Rex. "Who would put two \$100 bills in my pocket, and why should any one do such a crazy thing?"

"How do you know but Gruber dropped them in, seeing a chance to do so while he was helping recover the scattered money? He'd do anything to get you into trouble. Maybe it was he who shouted that you ought to be searched. You said a moment ago, you know, that it sounded like his voice."

"I'm beginning to smell a large-sized rat," said Rex, with sudden suspicion of the true state of affairs. "Mrs. Quill did say on the street that a boy told her he had seen me put some of her money in my pocket. I remember now the rascal bumped into me once or twice. I'm sorry I can't bring the matter home to him. If I could, well, say—I'd knock the daylight into him."

"He's a mean little beast, and I believe he put that job up on you. Well, what are you going to do with this money?"

"I guess it belongs to Mrs. Quill, all right. At any rate, I know it isn't my property. Therefore you'd better give it to her, and say it was left in your hands to return to her."

"All right, if you say so."

Then Rex left the room and rushed around to his own office, where he explained the cause of his lengthy absence to Mr. Sackman.

When he came out of the private office the cashier called him into the counting-room and handed him an envelope addressed to him in an unfamiliar hand.

He opened it and found one family-circle seat check for the Amsterdam Theatre for that evening's performance.

Also a few words scribbled on a blank card as follows:

"Having an important engagement to-night, I can't use this, so I send it to you, hoping you can avail yourself of the chance to see 'The White Cat.' "X. Y. Z."

"Who the dickens is X. Y. Z?" wondered Rex. "This must be a joke somebody is playing off on me. And yet the ticket looks to be genuine. Some friend of mine, I suppose, wants to mystify me by those ridiculous initials. Well, I'll use the ticket, anyway. I'd like to see 'The White Cat.' They say it is great. Sorry there aren't two tickets, so I could take Sam along."

Rex put the ticket in his vest pocket, and after supper started for the Amsterdam Theatre.

The family entrance was on 41st Street, and after climbing several flights of stairs he found no difficulty in passing the doorkeeper.

The seat was a good one in front, he enjoyed the show, and it was a few minutes after eleven when he came out on the street again.

Forty-first Street is not particularly a lighted thoroughfare at night, but it was only a few steps to Seventh Avenue, up which he proposed to walk to the Times Square underground station.

He had nearly reached the corner when a man, with a slouch hat, who had been following close behind, stepped up and struck him a powerful blow on the head.

Rex staggered up against the building on his right and then sank into a doorway unconscious.

CHAPTER XII.

IN "HELL'S KITCHEN."

The gray light of early dawn was struggling through the closed shutters of a miserable-looking room in the "Hell's Kitchen" district of New York City.

There was a ramshackle bed, a rickety chair and a small deal table in the place.

The soiled wallpaper was peeling off in patches here and there, and the plaster underneath was lacking in spots.

A great piece of the ceiling plaster was also missing, exposing the laths.

On the bed lay a boy, fully dressed, whose garments and general appearance looked strangely out of place in that unsavory room.

The light, as it grew stronger, brought his clear-cut features, now of a deathly white, into strong relief against the filthy gray blanket on which he was stretched.

For some hours he had lain there, silent and motionless as a corpse.

Twice an unshaven, blear-eyed, slovenly-dressed man, of perhaps sixty years, had unlocked the door, entered the room with a dirty lamp and looked at the boy.

He remained but a moment and then retired as he had come, leaving a taint of bad whiskey and vile tobacco in the air.

Finally a straggling ray of sunlight forced its way into the room through a break in the shutters.

By degrees it lengthened out and swung around until it crept over the face of the unconscious lad.

As if there was life and warmth in its contact, a faint glow of color began to chase away the lividness which heretofore had rested on his cheeks.

At last he sighed, raised one arm, turned over a little and finally sat bolt upright.

"Why, where am I?" he breathed in amaze, and the voice was the voice of Rex Richmond.

There was no one there to answer his question.

Rubbing his eyes to make sure that he wasn't dreaming, Rex swung around and put his feet to the floor.

As he essayed to stand he was overcome by a momentary sensation of faintness.

He was conscious, too, of a dull pain in the side of his head.

Pulling his wits together he tried to think what this all meant.

"How came I in this room? What sort of a place is it anyway?"

Steadying himself, he got on his feet and walked, like a sick person, to the door.

Turning the knob, he tried to open it.

He couldn't, for it was locked and the key was in the lock on the outside.

"What does this mean?" he muttered.

Then a wave of recollection came to him.

After he had come out of the theatre last night, someone had crept up behind and struck him down near the corner of Seventh Avenue.

Then he must have been brought to that room.

But why?

He put his hand in his pocket and found that the little money he had with him was gone.

His gold scarfpin and a ring he always wore were also missing.

Clearly he had been robbed.

But that fact did not account for his being in his present situation.

Well, the matter was quite beyond him.

He could only wait and see what would happen.

He lay down on the bed again to see if that would ease his head.

And while he lay there thinking he fell asleep.

An hour after the key was turned in the lock, the door opened and the same disreputable man, who bore every token of being a confirmed bum, entered the room for the third time and looked at him.

He gave a satisfied grunt and shuffled out again.

In a short time he returned with a plate of cold meat, two slices of buttered rye bread, and a small cracked jug of water.

He placed these things on the table and retired.

Rex awoke feeling much better.

The pain in his head had practically disappeared.

He sat up, and the first thing he noticed was the food.

"That was not there when I went to sleep," he said, approaching the table.

The fare, such as it was, proved welcome, for he was hungry, and he made no bones about cleaning up the dish and swallowing half of the water.

"It is evident I am a prisoner, though I fail to see the object of it all."

He went to the window and tried to open it, but the frames were nailed at the side.

Through the interstices of the shutters he caught a bare glimpse of a big brick building in the rear; but whether it was a factory or a tenement he could not tell.

Rex wasn't a boy to sit down and let things take their course, if he could see a way to better them.

He was in that room against his will, and if he could get out of it by his own efforts he was going to do so.

As he couldn't imagine why he was detained in the place he soon gave up trying to find a solution to the problem.

While he was considering the advisability of taking a slat from the bed, smashing the glass and shutters, and thus make a bold break for liberty, there came a noise at the door.

"I s'pose I'm going to have a visitor," he breathed. "Maybe he'll let a little light in on the subject. I'm willing that he should."

The door opened and a hard-looking man entered the room.

He had no hat on, and his hair was closely cropped to his head.

His face was smoothly shaven, with massive, bulldog-like jaws.

He only needed the prison stripes to stamp his character beyond a doubt.

"Well, young feller, how are yer feelin'?" he said, with a faint grin.

"I'd feel much better if I was outside on the street," replied Rex.

"P'raps you would, but yer ain't goin' out to-day, I'm thinkin'."

"Why not?" asked Rex sharply.

"Because yer not, see?"

"I'd like to know what I was brought to this place for."

"Yer was brought here 'cause it suited our arrangements."

"What arrangements?"

"Yer askin' altogether too many questions, young feller."

"I don't see what interest you can have in keeping me a prisoner here."

"Yer don't need to know. That's our business."

"Then you don't mean to tell me anything?"

"That's about the size of it."

"What did you come in here for?"

"I come in to take a look at yer."

"Is that all?"

"And to see if yer was comfortable," with a grin.

The fellow looked around the room, with a half-suspicious stare, and then took his departure, leaving the boy

as much in the dark as ever as to the intentions of his jailers.

Sometime during the afternoon a dish of beef stew, some bread and butter, and a bowl of coffee, evidently from some cheap restaurant, were brought to him by the blear-eyed man.

Rex was hungry and he ate and drank everything in sight.

He had given up the idea of trying to escape by the window, for he found out that he was on the third floor of the building, with a clear drop of over thirty feet to the yard below.

The door offered no chance, as he discovered, by peering through a crack, that the blear-eyed man was on guard outside all the time.

"Mother and the girls must be worried to death about me, but I don't see how I can help myself the way things are. Whatever game I'm up against, it looks as if I've got to see it through."

Time hung pretty heavy on the boy's hands as the day crawled slowly away.

He was used to an active, outdoor life, with plenty of excitement in the air about him, and to have to remain cooped up in a small, filthy room all by himself, not to speak of the mysterious nature of his confinement, was excessively galling to him.

But there wasn't any help for it.

He had to await the pleasure of his enemies.

Finally the light in the room began to grow dim by imperceptible degrees.

Night was coming again.

What developments would it bring in his situation?

He had given up consideration of the matter and was lying half-drowsy on the bed in the now dark room when the blear-eyed man appeared with a lamp and more restaurant provender—a small, tough steak, some fried potatoes, bread and butter, and a cup of coffee.

As Rex's appetite had not been affected by his captivity, he got up and made short work of the meal.

It was his habit not to drink much until he had finished with the solid part of his repast.

About two-thirds of the coffee remained in the cup when he put out his hand to finish it.

At that moment a big roach dropped from the ceiling onto his fingers.

He always had a great aversion to these pests.

The nervous movement he made to shake off the roach caused him to upset his cup, and the coffee ran over the edge of the table against the wall and dripped to the floor.

"The dickens take that roach! He's done me out of my coffee, and I wanted a good drink. That's my hard luck."

Ah! If he had only known!

Even while he looked at the dregs in the cup, a drowsy feeling crept over him, and then with a yawn he dropped his head on his arm and was soon in a profound slumber.

CHAPTER XIII.

SHANGHAIED.

Twenty minutes later the man with the bulldog physiognomy entered the room and noted the appearance of things with satisfaction.

He raised the boy's head and looked at him closely.

"He's safe enough," he muttered.

He left, locking the door after him.

In the course of half an hour a nighthawk cab was driven up to the door of the building.

A few moments after the man carried Rex downstairs and placed him in the cab.

Then he gave the driver certain directions and jumped into the vehicle, taking his seat beside his victim.

The cab was driven downtown at a rapid rate to a certain low sailors' boarding-house on South Street.

The man with the bulldog face went into the groggery which was on the ground floor and spoke to a short, thick-set individual behind the bar.

The fellow nodded and jerked his thumb in the direction of a back room.

The other man returned to the cab, lifted Rex out and, supporting him with his arm under his shoulders, half carried and half dragged the boy into the place, taking him through a door in the rear, and setting him down on a bench in the dimly-lighted room, already occupied by three intoxicated seafaring men.

Then he left, boarded the cab and was driven away.

Several hours passed, during which three other maudlin sailors were added to the company in the room.

About this time the effects of the drug, only a portion of which the boy had swallowed, owing to the upsetting of his coffee cup, began to wear off, and Rex became dimly conscious of his new surroundings.

In a dreamy sort of way he saw two men approach him.

One was the short, thick-set proprietor of the house; the other, with a slouch hat pulled low down over his eyes, was Bentley Hitchcock.

They stopped in front of the half-conscious boy.

"Bill Jarvis hocused him before he brought him down here," said the crimp, with a grin. "You want to have him shanghaied, eh?"

"Yes," replied Hitchcock.

"All right. I can put him aboard of the Stanhope, with the other chaps here. She sails with flood tide, about three in the morning, for South Africa."

"Good," said Sondheim's cashier.

"As the chap is a greeny, I can't get nothin' for him, so you'll have to stump up fifty bones for my trouble and risk."

"You are touching me rather stiff, Meiggs. Make it \$25."

"Can't do it. You're a gent and can easily afford fifty. If you're anxious to get the lad out of your way, you won't haggle over a dollar or two."

Hitchcock pulled out his pocketbook and reluctantly counted out the amount demanded.

"I depend on you to see that there's no mistake in this affair. Between you and Jarvis I'm out a cool hundred, and I want the goods delivered."

"Don't you fret. The boy will be miles at sea before he wakes up to his new surroundings. He's booked for a two-years' cruise unless he cuts the ship at Cape Town. And if he does he'll have no funds to bring him home. You'll be clear of him for some time, in any case."

"I don't care so much for that. If the captain of the Stanhope is the kind of man you say he is and will put this young monkey through a course of sprouts, I'm satisfied he'll get all that's coming to him on the trip out. That boy is altogether too uppish. He's handled me without gloves, and I'm going to get square with him. He'll never guess I'm at the bottom of this business, so it won't make any difference to me when he gets back."

By this time Rex was fully sensible to his surroundings and the ticklish situation in which he was placed.

He had heard and understood every word spoken by the two men, and what had been a mystery before was now as clear as the noonday sun.

Bentley Hitchcock was evidently a bigger rascal than he ever had any idea of.

It was plain that the crimp and the cashier believed him thoroughly under the influence of the drug administered to him, otherwise they wouldn't have talked so freely in his presence.

Realizing this fact, Rex was careful not to undeceive them.

He maintained his inert, lifeless appearance, while his active brain, now as alert as it had ever been in his life, was figuring upon the chances of successfully frustrating the scheme to ship him off to Africa on the Stanhope.

And if he succeeded!

Well, he rather guessed he would hand out to Mr. Hitchcock the surprise of his life—a free pass to Sing Sing.

The cashier, before withdrawing from the room, gave Rex a bit of a shaking, in order to satisfy himself that the boy was thoroughly stupefied.

Richmond was equal to the test, submitting to the rough handling as if he had been a sack of corn.

"Oh, he's good until morning," laughed the crimp, as he watched his patron pull his victim about. "You're only wasting time on him."

"I'd like to see him when he comes to himself," chuckled Hitchcock. "It would give me a heap of satisfaction. He was dead easy to be tricked by a theatre ticket. He really isn't as smart as I took him to be."

With another chuckle the cashier walked out of the room with the proprietor of the sailors' boarding-house, Rex watching them out of the corner of his eye.

"Now," thought the boy, "how am I going to make my escape? I haven't the least idea where I am; but I can easily guess I'm in a tough part of the city, and probably near the water front."

Rex cautiously raised his head and looked around the ill-lighted room.

He saw and heard the half-dozen snoring sailors who were sprawled about on the benches and floor of the place, which, from the long table in the center, with its score of chairs, he rightly judged to be the dining-room of the establishment.

Several beer and whiskey glasses lay upon the floor near some of the drunken mariners, showing they had wound up their debauch in that room.

There were two windows in the apartment and a back door leading to some unknown region in the rear.

A big-faced clock, noisily timing the fleeting moments, showed Rex that the hour was a little past midnight.

"I wonder if I dare investigate those windows," he mused. "Somebody might come in here any moment and catch me in the act, and then my name would be mud. But I must make a move before I'm taken aboard the vessel."

He was on the point of taking a shy at the nearest window, when a side door was suddenly opened, and the crimp, followed by three husky ruffians, entered the room.

The proprietor held the door open while his brawny assistants picked up the intoxicated sailors, one by one, and carried them out through an adjacent hallway to the street and tossed them into a wagon, already loaded with their bags.

Rex was the last to go, and he was piled on top of the others.

The crimp mounted beside the driver, two of the others followed, seating themselves with their feet hanging out at the back of the wagon, and then the outfit drove off.

Rex saw, by the tophammer of the numerous shipping on the other side of the way, that they were headed down South Street.

Somewhere in the vicinity of South ferry the vehicle drew up beside a boat landing; the live freight, Rex included, were tossed into a waiting boat, their bags after them, and then the crimp's two companions took a hand at the oars, and the boat shot out into the stream and headed for Governor's Island.

They pulled through the strait between the island and the Brooklyn shore, and then out again into the bay beyond.

Rex gazed around in the darkness as well as he could, though careful to make no move which would betray him, and he began to experience a sinking at the heart, as if he felt that the inevitable was going to happen anyway.

They passed by several dark objects that Rex judged to be vessels lying at anchor, and finally drew near a big shadow some distance from shore, which presently loomed up in the gloom as a big, iron ship, with some of her sails partially unfurled, as if about to start on her voyage, as indeed she was.

The rowboat bumped against her side and the rowers hauled in their oars.

"Boat ahoy!" sang out a voice from the rail above in a loud whisper.

"Jenkins!" was the answer, given in the same cautious tones.

"All right," replied the mate of the ship. "I thought you never were coming. Stand by, there, one of you, to catch the painter," he said to the sailors on deck, and one of them caught the rope which the crimp sent whirling up to him.

The boat was drawn up to the ladder that was quickly lowered over the side.

Jenkins and his assistants made no effort to arouse the fellows they had brought along, but, lifting them in their arms, one after the other, carried them up the ladder and laid them in a row on the deck, as if they had been dead men.

Rex was the last to be put on board the vessel, and he was deposited at the end of the row.

The captain now appeared on deck with a fountain pen and a roll of paper in his hands.

"What's this man's name?" asked the skipper, stopping at the head of the row, and pointing with his pen toward the first of the prostrate sailors.

"John Smith," replied the crimp, "and he is an able seaman."

The captain wrote Smith's name and rating on the shipping articles, and then, kneeling down beside him, placed the pen between his nerveless fingers and, seizing his hand in his own, made a cross with it upon the shipping articles.

This done, he passed the pen over to his mate, who signed his own name opposite Smith's as a witness to this piece of iniquity.

Although the whole proceeding was outrageous, the form was according to law, and Smith, had he recovered his senses at the moment, would have been held, in spite of his remonstrances, for the cruise.

While the mate was signing his name to the articles, the captain produced his pocketbook and counted out a certain amount of money in bills, which he placed in Smith's hand, closing his fingers over them.

Then he went on to sign the next unconscious victim in the same way.

And while he was doing it, Jenkins, the boarding-house man, coolly unclasped Smith's fingers and put the money in his pocket.

The same procedure he followed in each of the other cases, the captain and mate paying not the slightest attention to him.

Rex saw all this, as he was lying on his side, facing the head of the line, and wondered greatly at the knavery of the whole thing.

But he soon had something else to think about, for presently the skipper and his mate stopped in front of him.

"That chap is Bill Jones," said Jenkins, indicating Rex, "and he is an ordinary seaman."

"Well, he doesn't look it," said the captain, sharply. "What is this you're palming off on me, Jenkins?"

"You kin have him for \$20, and no wages, and make what you can out of him."

"But I don't want any landlubbers aboard this ship," objected the skipper.

Then Jenkins took him aside, whispered something in his ear, to which the captain gave a reluctant assent, and then Rex was signed and Jenkins got his \$20.

CHAPTER XIV.

CAUGHT IN THE ACT.

"Turn to and take that dunnage into the fo'k's'l," said the captain of the Stanhope to two of his sailors, who immediately grabbed hold of the bags belonging to the newly-shipped seamen and carried them forward.

Then the men themselves were carried after their property, Rex, as usual, being the last of the bunch to be lifted and conveyed down into the vile-smelling "sailors' parlor," as it has satirically been called.

He, like the others, was tossed like a log of wood into an unoccupied bunk and left to recover his senses, as they supposed, later on.

For a moment or two Rex lay in the bunk, a prey to despair.

"It's all over, and I'm booked for South Africa sure enough," he groaned.

Then his young manhood asserted itself, and he sprang from the bunk with a look of resolution on his brave countenance.

"No. I won't go to South Africa, if I die for it! I'll try to swim ashore first."

He ran swiftly and silently on deck, no one observing him in the dark.

Going to the side of the fore-castle deck, he looked over the bay to see if he could make out how far from the nearest shore the Stanhope lay.

She was at a considerable distance from the Brooklyn docks, which could not be made out through the gloom.

"I'm afraid swimming is out of the question," breathed the boy disappointedly. "That is, unless I can find something which I could rely on to keep me afloat."

At that moment his hand rested on a rope hanging over the side.

Mechanically he pulled on it and found it offered some resistance, but still yielded to his arm.

Glancing down sharply, he saw that it was attached to a dark, moving object.

"B'gee! I believe that's a small boat," he muttered with a thrill of hope. "Yes, I'm sure it is," he added a moment later, as he heard the shadowy thing bump gently against the vessel's side. "Here goes for liberty," he said launching himself over the Stanhope's side and sliding down the line.

His feet touched the boat and he sprang into it.

Then, finding that the knot resisted his efforts in the dark, he drew his jack-knife, which had not been taken from him, and with one of the sharp blades soon severed the painter, when the ebb tide seized the yawl and carried it away from the ship and diagonally out into the bay toward the distant shore of Staten Island.

As soon as the ship faded into the night Rex got out the oars and began to row toward the Battery.

He soon saw that he made no progress against the strong tide, which was drawing him toward the Narrows.

"I shall have to land on Staten Island," he said to himself, so he began to row leisurely across the tide, without any definite idea where he would hit the island when he came down to it.

An hour later Staten Island was well abreast of him, and he had managed to guide his yawl within one-eighth of a mile of the shore.

He now rowed for the island in earnest, and under his muscular arms the boat shot speedily along until he beached her on the suburbs of a town.

Abandoning the yawl, Rex struck out for the trolley track, knowing that a car would come along sometime, which would take him down to the ferry.

He judged that it must be after two o'clock.

After a while he recognized the place as Stapleton by certain landmarks he had seen a number of times before.

Mr. Sackman, the senior partner of his firm, lived in Stapleton, and Rex had, on several occasions, been sent to his home.

In fact, on this occasion, the boy found he was walking up the very street on which Mr. Sackman's suburban residence was located.

Pretty soon he reached the broker's house, a good-sized, substantial mansion, built right upon the street line, with an extensive lawn surrounded by an iron fence on one side, while on the other was a flagged yard protected by a tall brick wall.

There was a door in the brick wall, and a street lamp stood nearby opposite it.

It was through this doorway that all tradesmen delivered their merchandise.

It was always kept closed and bolted against intruders.

Rex knew of this rule, consequently he was greatly surprised, as he came along the walk, to observe that this door was partly ajar.

He probably wouldn't have noticed the fact but for the light of the street lamp shining full upon it.

The circumstance struck him as being somewhat suspicious.

He stopped and looked at it.

"William, the gardener, told me that that door is always kept bolted, even in the daytime. Errand boys and others have to ring the bell for admittance. I don't like the look of its being ajar at this hour in the morning."

Rex decided to investigate.

He believed it was a duty he owed his employer.

So he walked up to the door, pushed it half open and peered into the yard.

The light of the gas lamp flashed through and rested upon one of the barred side windows of the dining-room.

The boy's gaze followed the light and he was startled to see that below the cross-bar three of the vertical iron bars had been sawed out, and lay upon the flagging underneath the window.

"There's been something doing here for a fact," he breathed. "I'll have to give an alarm. But if there are burglars in the house now, they will probably be able to escape. If I thought I could find a policeman, or the police station, I'd try to bag the crooks, in case they are still here. But I wouldn't know where to look for a cop if my life were at stake. It's dollars to doughnuts that if I started out to search for one, I'd have my trouble for nothing. Now, what had I better do? Hello!"

There was good reason for this sudden exclamation on his part.

His gaze wandering around the enclosure, he observed a man gagged and bound, lying on his back, in the center of the court.

His hat and coat lay a few feet away on the flagging.

"Good gracious!" cried Rex. "Who is that? Can it be William?"

He stepped inside the enclosure and approached the helpless figure.

The unfortunate individual saw the lad and began to squirm and moan to attract his attention.

"Why, William, is this you?" said Richmond, kneeling by his side.

The gardener made some inarticulate sounds through the thick bit of cloth which covered his mouth and nodded his head.

As Rex raised the man in his arms a dark face, partially concealed by a black mask, appeared at the opening where the bars had been removed.

Then, noiseless as a shadow, the man himself slipped out of the window.

But Rex felt his presence and looked up.

The burglar was in the full glare of the street lamp, while the boy knelt in the shadow.

The fellow, a well-built man with a moustache, was dressed in rough and somewhat ragged attire, with a slouch hat pulled down over his mask.

He saw that he was observed, and, with a low imprecation, started for the open gate.

But Richmond, on the spur of the moment, dropped the gardener, sprang to his feet and rushed after him.

They came together at the gate and clinched.

Then, as the boy's face was reflected in the gaslight, the burglar started back with an oath.

Rex took advantage of the chance and struck the fellow a heavy blow in the face.

Hat and mask were swept away and he stood revealed to Richmond's startled gaze as—Bentley Hitchcock.

CHAPTER XV.

A FOUL BLOW.

Rex's hold on the ragged coat relaxed, and he could do nothing but stand and stare in stupefied astonishment at the well-known features of the cashier of Sondheim, Leisberger & Co., who, of all men in the world, was the last

the boy expected to encounter either at Stapleton at that hour in the morning or under the guise of a housebreaker.

The surprise was mutual, as may be surmised, for Hitchcock believed that Rex Richmond was on board the British ship Stanhope, the victim of a strong drug.

The boy's appearance here in Stapleton, on the very spot where the cashier was engaged in some nefarious enterprise, was a startler to the Wall Street employee.

It was lucky for him that he was the first to recover from the shock which, for the moment, had dazed them both.

He clutched Rex by the throat and forced him down on the flagging.

"Curse you! I'll kill you! If you live I can never face Wall Street again."

But Richmond was no easy proposition to handle.

He also realized that he was fighting for his life.

The struggle that ensued was a fierce one.

Hitchcock soon found out he couldn't have things his way, although he was the bigger, stronger and, perhaps, the more desperate of the two.

Failing to choke Rex, he tried to pound him into insensibility.

Had he succeeded, the chances are he would afterward have brained him with one of the broken iron bars.

But fortunately for the boy a newcomer appeared on the scene at this critical moment.

It was a Stapleton policeman.

He had heard the racket going on in the Sackman yard and came up to see what it meant.

Hitchcock noticed his shadow before he got within reach of him, and, giving Rex one terrible blow, which failed to be decisive, he jumped off the prostrate boy, sprang through the gate, and, brushing by the astonished officer, ran down the street and was lost in the gloom of the night.

Rex staggered to his feet just as the policeman thrust his head into the yard.

"Hello!" exclaimed the officer. "What does all this mean?"

"Has he got away?" asked the boy, leaning up against the wall almost exhausted by the fight he had been compelled to put up to save himself.

"If you mean the man who managed to pass me just now, I rather guess he has. But I've got you at any rate," said the intelligent officer, laying his official grip on the lad, "and you'll have to go along with me."

"Go along nothing," retorted Rex, when his breath and self-possession came back to him. "Mr. Sackman's house has been broken into, and you have allowed the rascal to escape."

"Probably you are one of his pals, and I don't mean that you shall cut your hooks. What's this? Another fellow, eh? Bound and gagged, too. I guess I know that face. It's William Beard. We'll see what he has to say on the subject, young fellow. Enough, I dare say, to send you up the river."

"You're a clever cop, you are, I don't think," replied

Richmond sarcastically. "Cut that gag away from his mouth, and he'll tell you who I am."

The officer looked hard into the boy's face.

"And while I'm doing it you'll try to skip, eh?" he said with a chuckle.

Rex laughed.

"I've got a knife. You can hold me tight while I cut William free."

"I'm not taking any chances of you using your knife on me, young man," said the suspicious officer. "I've a pair of handcuffs in my pocket which I'll just put on you by way of precaution," and he inserted one hand into his hip pocket, while he maintained a good hold on Rex with the other.

"I tell you, officer, you are making a mistake. I am Rex Richmond, a messenger in Mr. Sackman's office in Wall Street. You recognize me, don't you, William?"

The gardener nodded vigorously.

"There, you see," said Rex quickly.

"Well," replied the policeman, only partly convinced, "if you are what you claim to be, how comes it you are here at this hour in the morning?"

"That would be too long a story for you to listen to now. Here, this man is suffering while you are putting up a useless argument. Cut him free or let me do it," said the boy resolutely.

Rex's fearless and straightforward manner, more than his words, began to have its effect on the officer, and he told the boy to go ahead.

In one minute William, the gardener, was released from his painful fetters and stood up.

"Now," asked the policeman, "what's been going on here?"

William then made the following statement:

That he slept in a small room off the butler's pantry; was awakened by a noise at one of the lower windows; got up and found some one sawing at the iron bars of one of the windows; dressed himself quickly and, with his coat on his arm, let himself out at the kitchen door, intending to go for the coachman, who slept in the stable at the back of the grounds; discovered that the intruder seemed to be alone; believed he could capture him himself; tried to and found he was not in the scrap which ensued; he was bound and gagged by the villain, who finished his work without further interruption and entered the house, where he remained, he judged, about fifteen minutes, coming out after Rex's arrival on the scene.

"He doesn't appear to have got away with any swag, unless it was money or jewels that he could stow away in his pockets," said the officer. "We'll go in and take a look. Is Mr. Sackman and his family at home?"

"Mr. Sackman is, but Mrs. Sackman and the girls have gone to Philadelphia on a visit," said the gardener.

"Whatever the burglar succeeded in doing inside, he didn't arouse Mr. Sackman, it seems," said the officer.

And Rex could not but wonder what object brought Bentley Hitchcock to enact the role of a housebreaker on Mr. Sackman's premises.

The three entered the house through the broken bars, after bolting the gate, and took their way upstairs, looking into each room as they passed along and noting that nothing seemed to have been disturbed.

Mr. Sackman's bedroom door stood wide open, and the officer entered boldly, followed by Rex and the gardener.

What they saw took them all aback.

The wealthy broker lay, encumbered by the bedclothes, face down on the carpet.

Blood was oozing from a nasty wound in the back of his head, and the weapon that had inflicted it lay beside him—one of the iron bars sawed from the window below.

"Is he dead?" gasped the gardener and Rex, in a horrified breath.

"No," answered the officer, after a momentary pause. "He is not, but I am afraid his condition is very serious. Get a doctor at once, Beard. This is a bad piece of business."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE KING OF THE MARKET.

At seven o'clock that morning Rex was home in the arms, alternately, of the little mother and three sisters who had been almost distracted over his unexplained and unaccountable absence.

"I can't tell you anything now, mother," said Rex in a tone and manner which commanded their silence on the subject. "Something dreadful has happened to Mr. Sackman at his home on Staten Island, and I've got to notify Mr. Withers at his apartments at once. Only my duty to you, mother, brought me home now. Now that you see I am all right you will try to curb your curiosity until I return again and make the whole thing clear to you."

"Well, Rex, I am sure you know what is best. Go, my son, and come back to us as soon as you can."

"I will, mother, you may depend."

He kissed them twice each, and was off like a shot.

At eight o'clock Rex, after a light breakfast in a restaurant, was pounding on Mr. Withers's door in the elegant bachelor apartments at the "Cremorne."

The broker was just turning out of bed when the summons came.

"Who's there?" he demanded through the door.

"Rex Richmond. I must see you on a very serious matter."

"Wait a moment."

Two minutes later Rex was admitted to the sitting-room.

"Where the deuce were you yesterday?" asked the junior member of Sackman, Withers & Co. "One of your sisters was down at the office in the morning looking for you. She said you hadn't been home all night. Then your mother telephoned late in the afternoon that you were still absent. Where were you?"

"I can't tell you now, sir. I've got something more important to communicate."

Mr. Withers stared at him.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Mr. Sackman was struck down by a villain in his home early this morning."

"What?" gasped Withers. "Is that the truth?"

"It is, sir, unfortunately."

"He isn't dead, is he?"

"No; but the doctor says he is suffering from concussion of the brain."

"My heaven!" ejaculated the broker. "This is awful news, and at such a moment, too. How did it happen?"

Rex gave him a brief outline of the affair, suppressing Hitchcock's identity for the time being.

"Terrible! Terrible!" said Mr. Withers, in an agitated way. "But how came you to be there at that time, Rex? What business carried you to Stapleton?"

"That is a part of my own story, which must wait for the present," answered the boy.

"I must see Mr. Sackman at once," said Withers, beginning to dress with feverish haste.

"You can't see him, sir. His condition is too serious. Besides, it would be useless, as he is unconscious. The doctors say he may die without recovering his senses."

Mr. Withers stopped and looked at Rex like a man who had received a sudden and overwhelming blow.

"If Mr. Sackman's condition is as you say," he said in a strangely altered voice, "the firm will go to pieces to-day on the Exchange."

"Why, what do you mean, sir?" asked Richmond in surprise.

"I mean that Great Western Securities Co., against which the bear clique has been battering away with greater violence than ever since Monday, will go down with a crash, and, with our enormous holdings in the company, that spells absolute ruin."

"Why should Mr. Sackman's condition cause this? Are not you the head and front of Great Western on the floor? Haven't I heard Mr. Sackman say that you alone know all the ins and outs of this deal? That you held the helm and was running the thing?"

"That's true enough; but I depend on Mr. Sackman to furnish the money necessary to meet our engagements. The funds of the firm have already been swallowed up in the fight, and lately Mr. Sackman has been advancing the money from his private resources. He is already in over two million. It will take another million, perhaps, to force the opposition to a settlement. Without Sackman at my back to-day I cannot sustain my position. The bear syndicate knows this. The moment the news gets out, and it will be in all the early afternoon editions of the city papers, Sondheim will jump on me like a thousand of bricks, and then nothing can save Great Western. And, further, the crash in the Securities Co. is bound to precipitate a general panic on the floor."

"Great Scott!" murmured the boy.

"Well, there is nothing to do but face the inevitable," said Withers in a tone of resignation. "I will hypothecate the last of our securities this morning, and when the mar-

ket opens at ten I will endeavor to stem the tide of disaster until I see if I can get help from certain outside interests. If these fail me, all is lost."

"Then it is simply a question of money, sir?"

"Simply a question of money—a paltry half-million might turn the tide and win the fight. Yes, it will take all of that to save us, but where it is coming from at this critical hour, heaven alone knows; I do not."

"A paltry half-million," muttered Rex as he left the "Cremorne" a few minutes later. "Surely, Mr. Withers ought to be able to raise that among his business friends, especially when it's a case of life or death, and Mr. Sackman is good for every cent of it."

But Rex forgot that cautious business men might hesitate to advance so large a sum, when the only security was the indefinite possibility of Mr. Sackman's recovery.

In the event of his death, his estate could not be held liable for any act of Mr. Withers, as the partnership was a limited one.

As Rex stepped out of the Hanover Square underground station a sudden and terrible idea occurred to him.

Was Sondheim, Leisberger & Co. responsible for the condition of Mr. Sackman?

That firm was the head and front of the coalition opposed to Great Western.

He remembered what Mr. Judson had remarked that Saturday afternoon on the ferryboat.

That Sondheim was a bad man to be up against.

That unless Sondheim could break Great Western he and his associates would be ruined and forced out of the Street perhaps.

Well, who had struck down Mr. Sackman?

Who but the confidential cashier of Sondheim, Leisberger & Co., in the guise of a housebreaker.

"Great Cæsar!" gasped Rex. "Is it possible that these men would stoop to absolute murder to accomplish their object?"

He went to the office in a daze.

At ten o'clock Withers left for the Exchange with his usual promptness.

He had raised \$100,000 as a desperate effort to save the firm from the threatened Waterloo.

It was his only hope.

Rex stood by the ticker as nervous as a girl making her social debut.

The fight of the day was on, and he watched it from afar.

For an hour Great Western Securities Co. held its own, then came the first tokens of disaster as the price began to drop by fits and starts.

At that moment the ponderous Hamilton Whitehouse rushed into the office.

"Great heaven, boy!" he cried, grasping Rex by the arm. "Is this true what I have seen in the extra about Sackman?"

"Yes, sir; it is true."

"Then heaven help the market to-day!" and he staggered to the door.

The boy rushed after him, thinking he was going to fall, but he didn't.

And as Rex watched him from the door, he saw Mrs. Quill coming along the corridor.

The same old dress and bonnet, only a new handbag.

And while the boy looked, there came into his head a startling idea.

Only a paltry half-million was needed, perhaps, to save the firm, and here was a woman who was reputed to have that much many times over.

He had saved her life—yes, there was no doubt about that.

She owed him a debt of gratitude, and had promised to do something for him.

He would ask her to save Great Western for his sake.

It required a great nerve to do it, but the rapid-fire ticking of the indicator in the reception-room spurred him on.

He rushed out and begged her to walk into the office—he wanted to talk with her—on a matter of life or death.

She was surprised, but yielded to his earnest solicitation.

He took her into Mr. Sackman's private office and then, without any preliminaries, he told her what he wanted her to do for him.

"It is in your power to save the Great Western Securities Co., Mrs. Quill, from absolute wreck at the hands of a clique of scoundrels who appear to be gentlemen, yet are actually guilty of a deliberate attempt to murder the head of this firm. In saving Great Western you will save the market, now on the verge of collapse. If you are long on stocks, as I believe you are, you will save yourself, and you will save me, too, for I have nearly \$6,000, the profit of all my previous ventures, up on margin on a thousand shares of C. & O. I want your check for \$500,000, and the security I offer is the debt of gratitude you owe me for saving your life."

The little old woman listened intently to Rex's appeal.

"The security is good for a million," she said, and then she wrote the check the boy had asked for. "The bank will certify it. Use it as you think best. If you require the rest of the million, call on me at Boomsby's."

"Mrs. Quill, you have done all I could have asked of my own mother. Permit me to say you are an angel. You will excuse me now, for I haven't a moment to lose."

Rex rushed around to the bank on which the check was drawn and had it certified, and then, like a winged Mercury, flew to the New Street entrance to the Stock Exchange.

He was about to send in for Mr. Withers, when he saw that gentleman stagger away from the Great Western corner with the stamp of defeat and ruin on his manly countenance.

The bear forces, led by Sondheim, had battered down his last defense and were now howling the pæan of victory like a pack of jackals over a freshly-slain corpse.

The great, the indomitable, the hitherto unassailable Withers was down and out, and the whole mob of rampant

bears, big and little, were snapping and snarling, eager to be in at the death.

It was the turning point of the battle which had, for weeks past, been fought over the destinies of the Great Western Securities Co.

A block of 5,000 shares, the last decisive card of Sondheim's, which he and his agents had been gathering for this express purpose for many days past, had just been thrown on the market at the precise moment when they saw that their opponent was weakening, and Withers couldn't take it.

Then the slaughter began.

And it was at that crucial moment Rex appeared on the scene with his check for \$500,000.

Brushing the doorkeeper aside, he rushed out on the floor and seized Mr. Withers by the arm.

"Here, sir, is a certified check to my order for half a million, which I have made payable to you. Take it and use it to save Great Western. If it is not enough, you can call on me over the 'phone for another \$500,000, and it shall be handed to you within fifteen minutes. Not a word, Mr. Withers. You have only got just time enough to jump in and snow Sondheim under."

Withers couldn't understand it, but he knew that every second was precious, and he didn't try to understand it—then.

He grasped his young messenger by the hand, muttered a husky "God bless you, Rex," and rushed again into the thick of the fray.

One minute more and the whole floor knew that Withers had received unexpected help and was himself again.

Sondheim was staggered.

His last trick was taken, and he was forced to give up the fight.

As the arrival of Blucher brought defeat and ruin to Napoleon at Waterloo, so the arrival of Rex Richmond at the Exchange that morning wiped Sondheim, Leisberger & Co. from the Wall Street map, and many erstwhile wealthy men who were identified with their interests went down to ruin with them.

In sixty seconds Great Western Securities Co. had leapt once more above par, the entire line recovered and the bulls were triumphant on all sides.

And though no one but Withers recognized the fact, the real king of the market that day was a messenger boy of Wall Street—Rex Richmond.

But the real state of affairs soon came out.

Withers told the story next day and acknowledged who it was who saved both Great Western and the entire market.

And the story flew all over the financial district in no time, bringing brokers by the score to the offices of Sackman, Withers & Co., that they might see and speak to Rex Richmond, the hero of the hour—the King of the Market!

"I am proud to take you by the hand, young man," said Hamilton Whitehouse, the fat bank director. "You saved me \$100,000, and I shan't forget the fact."

And that afternoon he sent Rex around a handsome gold watch and chain.

"I say, Rex," said Sam Rickey that evening, "I've had to buy a new hat."

"I thought you bought one a week ago," said his friend.

"So I did, but," with a grin, "the honor of being the chum of the King of the Market has so enlarged my occiput that my old hats won't fit."

Whereupon Rex threatened to chase him out of the house.

"Well, what have you to say about the matter, Miss Forbes?" said Rex next morning. "Everybody but you seems to have had his little word. I'm listening."

"I've nothing to say, Rex—now."

A year or two later, when Rex was a broker on his own account, and a very successful one, she said "Yes," and Richmond considered that covered the whole ground.

Two weeks after the red-letter day in Rex's calendar, he sold his C. & O. stock at the high-water mark of 92, clearing \$40,000 profit on the deal.

After all settlements had been made in the Great Western deal, Withers handed Rex his check for \$100,000 as his share in the profits which came to the firm by reason of the final rise in price on the day of victory.

Mr. Sackman did not die, but eventually recovered to thank his young messenger boy for saving him at least two and a half millions of dollars.

Bentley Hitchcock took time by the forelock and escaped from the country.

He was subsequently killed in a drinking-saloon in Brazil.

As for Saul Gruber, when Sondheim, Leisberger & Co. went out of business, he found it impossible to get another situation in Wall Street, and became a ticket chopper on the Elevated railroad.

When Rex went into business for himself, Boomsby & Co. lost a good customer—Mrs. Quill transferred her patronage to Richmond, the YOUNGEST TRADER IN WALL STREET.

THE END.

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